STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES AT ACTIONAID KENYA

BY:

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DECLARATION

This project is my original work and has not been presented for any degree in any other university.

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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my family Mr. & Mrs. Abuya, my siblings Laurette and Edwin and my better half John Beku whose love and faith in my abilities inspires me to focus on higher goals.

ABSTRACT

Strategy implementation is often called the action phase of the strategic management process which is the most challenging. Executing the strategy is a tougher more consuming management challenge than crafting the strategy because of the wide array of managerial activities that have to be attended to. The demanding people-management skills required, the initiatives that need to be launched and moving, the bedeviling issues that need to be worked out, the resistance to change, and the difficulties of integrating the efforts of work groups into a functioning whole. For the effective implementation of strategy an organization must achieve congruency between structure, leadership, culture and the capability of the organization.

This study focused on the strategy implementation challenges and measures used to address the challenges at ActionAid. To achieve these objectives a case study was carried out to gain an in-depth understanding of the challenges. Both primary and secondary data were used. Primary data was collected using a self-administered interview guide while the secondary data was collected from the collected from the organizations document such as annual reports, website and strategic plan. A total of eight respondents were interviewed by use of an interview guide. The respondents included the senior, middle and lower level managers. Content analysis was used to analyze the data after it was first checked for consistency and then coded.

There was an alignment between the research findings and the literature review carried out. The major challenges as revealed in the study highlighted inadequate resources which made it difficult for the organization to execute the strategies, employee

commitment to strategy that was limited to implementation of the specific activities in the operational plan, the policies and procedures practiced and resistance from the staff.

The researcher recommends that a similar study be carried out on organizations that are of the same size and operate in areas of intervention that are close to ActionAid so as to establish if the challenges of strategy implementation encountered are similar to those of ActionAid or unique. . There is need to examine how the process can impact on institutional commitment, narrow organizational vision, discourage change, and breed an atmosphere of politics. Also the ever increasing importance of knowledge and the general recognition of knowledge as the strategic asset in most organizations, raise important question whether traditional strategy theory and practice provide adequate knowledge of the organization. Most institutional strategies are time bound thus organizational discontinuity and easily are predicted, and these strategies are developed by external strategist who is most at times detached from the operations of the organization. These two strategic planning practices may result to effective strategy implementation.

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ACRONYMNS & ABBREVIATIONS

ARV   Anti-retroviral

CEO   Chief Executive Officer

DRR   Disaster Risk Reduction

M&E   Monitoring and Evaluation

NGO   Non- Governmental Organization

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Well formulated strategies only produce superior performance for the firm when they are successfully implemented. Many organizations both profit and non-profit have discovered the benefits of strategic planning. Determining the strategy of an organization is one of the functions of the management. It is arguably the most significant area of management decision making and more importantly one in which to make the right decisions. Strategic planning determines where an organization is going over the next year or more, how it's going to get there and how it'll know if it got there or not. According to Aosa(1992), once strategies have been developed, they need to be implemented otherwise they are of no value unless they are efficiently translated into action. However, poor implementation of an appropriate strategy may cause that strategy to fail (Kiruthi, 2001).

An excellent implementation plan will not only cause the success of an appropriate strategy but can also prevent the execution of an otherwise inappropriate strategy.Strategy implementation is not as well structured and formatted as strategy formulation. It involves both tangible and intangible variables such as cultures, values, motivation, commitment, power relationships, attitudes, perceptions, managing human and physical resources etc. organizations that want to be successful must develop strategies and implement them successfully. If the strategies are developed without taking

into consideration the organizational objectives, its implementation will lead to problems arising hence failing.

1.1.2 Strategy Implementation

Pearce and Robinson (1994) define strategy as large scale, future-oriented plans for interacting with the competitive environment to optimize achievement of organizational objectives. Strategy is the direction and scope of an organization over the long-term, which achieves advantage for the organization through its configuration of resources within a changing environment to meet the needs of the market and fulfill stakeholder expectation. (Johnson and scholes, 2003.)A strategy is a pattern or plan that integrates an organizations goals, policies and action sequences to a cohesive whole (Mintzberg, Quinn and Ghosal,1999). A well formulated strategy helps to marshal and allocate an organization resources into a unique and viable posture based on its relative internal competencies and shortcomings, anticipated changes in the environment and contingent moves by intelligent opponents. Mintzberg(1987) defines strategy with a variety of views; as a plan, ploy, pattern, position and finally as a perspective. Strategy as a plan deals with how leaders try to establish direction for organization, while as a ploy it takes us to the realm of direct competition where maneuver is employed to gain competitive advantage. As a pattern strategy focuses on action that is consistent in behavior and is key to achieving organizational goals. Strategy as a position encourages organizations in their competitive environment in order to protect, avoid or subvert competition. Strategy as a perspective is an ingrained way of perceiving the world.

Strategy implementation is one of the components of strategic management and refers to a set of decisions and actions that result in the implementation of long term plans

designed to achieve organizational objectives (Pearce & 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).Strategy implementation involves several processes. It first involves allocation of sufficient resources which include financial, personnel, time and computer system support. Secondly, establishing a chain of command or some alternative structure such as cross functional teams. Thirdly, assigning responsibility of specific tasks or processes to specific individuals or groups. Finally it involves managing the process which includes monitoring results, comparing to benchmarks and best practices, evaluating the efficacy and efficiency of the process, controlling variances and making adjustments to the process as necessary.

Once strategies have been developed they need to be implemented. David(1997) states that strategy will most likely be expressed in high level conceptual terms and priorities. For effective implementation, it needs to be translated into more detailed policies that can be understood at functional level of the organization. The expression of strategy in terms of functional policies also serves to highlight any practical issues that might not have been visible at a higher level. The strategy should be translates into specific policies for functional areas.

1.1.3 Strategy Implementation Challenges

Despite the numerous studies already undertaken in strategy implementation challenges and the common challenges published, implementation still remains a nightmare to many organizations hence there is need to do more research as to the reason why the failure is still happening. Wessel (1993) stated clearly that most of the individual barriers to

strategy implementation that have been encountered fit into one of the following categories. Too many and conflicting priorities, the top team does not function well, a top down management style, inter-functional conflicts, poor communication. These categories can be further translated into the following challenges that hamper implementation of strategies: key formulators do not play an active role in implementation, changes in responsibilities of key employees not being clearly defined, and problems requiring top management not being communicated early enough.

The most important problem in strategy implementation is lack of proper communication. The amount of strategic communication in most organizations is large, both written and oral communication is used mostly in form of top down communication. However this does not guarantee understanding and there is still much to be done on the field of communicating strategies.Alcantara (2001) states that lack of success to implementation can be subdivided into four barriers. Firstly the management barrier which reflects the problem that the focus of management activities is dealing with the daily business and not discussing the new strategies.Secondly a vision barrier which arises when vision and strategies are not explained to other organizational staff in a comprehensible way. Thirdly there is a resource barrier which means that the resources are not deployed properly. In such cases implementation becomes difficult.

1.1.4 Action Aid Kenya

ActionAid is a non-partisan, non-religious development organization that has been working in Kenya since 1972 to end poverty and injustices. From educating children when it started in the early 1970s, ActionAid now focuses on tackling the root causes of

poverty rather than just meeting people's immediate needs. It is among the leading anti-poverty agency working directly with over one million poor and excluded people in over 20 districts of Kenya. Throughout the country it aims to work with local and community-based organizations who have essential knowledge and experience and enjoy the confidence of the poor and marginalized communities we work with. ActionAid Kenya has its headquarters in Nairobi. Apart from its Nairobi Centre office, ActionAid has three regional offices; The North-East Regional Office is in Embu, Western Regional office is in Kisumu and the Coast Regional Office is in Mombasa. The three regional offices are responsible for 16 development initiatives where programme implementation is done by the communities it works with and partner organisations.

 The organization is primarily concerned with the promotion and defense of economic, social, cultural, civil and political human rights. Employing local staff in its work, the organization supports projects and programmes that promote the interests of poor and excluded people at all levels. Recognizing that poverty cannot be fought single-handedly this it works with others in the fight to end poverty and injustices.The 2006-2010 strategy defines the focus and the results expected in each area of our work. It defines the values and principles within which the organization will work and interact with the people ActionAid works with and also provides the basis within which the organizations work will be evaluated. Recognizing that its work is about people, the strategy places emphasis on people. It challenges ActionAid staff to always think what value their actions will add to poor and excluded people.

ActionAid is helping people to better anticipate, reduce and manage disaster risks by incorporating risk reduction measures in development.Reducing disasters is important in achieving the Millennium Development Goals, particularly the overriding goal of halving extreme poverty by 2015.The Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) programme was started in January 2005 .DRR helps people to better anticipate, reduce and manage disaster risks by incorporating risk reduction measures in development planning and policies.   The programme also seeks to reduce exposure to different hazards and help populations that are vulnerable to cope and adapt to disasters. This has been done through the DFID-funded project - Disaster Reduction through Schools. The programme targets 15,000 children and their communities through 56 at-risk schools in various countries including Malawi, Kenya, Ghana, Haiti, Bangladesh and Nepal. In Kenya, DRR is being implemented in Ijara District in North Eastern Province. Ijara district was identified because of its high risk of recurrent natural disasters like drought, flooding and destructive winds.

It works in villages, cities and the corridors of power to support groups that are campaigning to reverse the devastating impact of HIV and AIDS on millions of lives. Since 1987 it has been giving practical support to people living with AIDS-related diseases in Kenya. ActionAid wants to help poor and excluded people to challenge and influence governments, private corporations and other organisations to ensure their right to free and comprehensive HIV and AIDS prevention, treatment, care and support. So it does this by trying to ensure an end to sexual violence, one of main reasons why HIV and AIDS levels are increasing so rapidly. It's proven that if women can chose and manage their sexual relationships, infection rates can be managed, that people living with HIV

and AIDS have access to anti-retroviral (ARV) drugs, comprehensive prevention information, essential treatment, care, support and livelihood inheritance, that their livelihoods are sustainable, that global and local policies affecting them work in their favor and that organizations run by people living with HIV and AIDS are strengthened.

1.2 Research Problem

Strategy implementation is a phase in which systems and procedures are put in place to collect and process the data that enable the measurements to be made regularly (Freedman and Tregoe, 2003). According to Pearce and Robinson, (2004) success or failure of a strategy implementation revolves around the nature of the strategy itself, the policies and support system, alignment of the strategy to short term objective, the allocation of resources, the fit between structure and strategy, leadership, communication process and the organization culture. The importance of strategy implementation should never be underestimated because the best formulated strategy is virtually worthless if it cannot be implemented effectively.

ActionAid has just finished implementing its strategic plan(Towards a just Kenya) for the year 2006-2010 whose main aim was to empower the poor and their institutions to secure their rights and support the eradication of injustices that cause inequalities and poverty. Some of the established targets and objectives have not been met due to challenges encountered during implementation. A review of the plan is necessary because it will help ActionAid to identify the key gaps and challenges that led to non-achievement of established targets.In order to achieve the vision for the next strategic plan, it is important for management to know the challenges they faced for the 2006-2010 strategic plan. This

knowledge will be of great help especially coming up with the 2011-2015 year ActionAid strategic plan.

A number of studies have been carried out on the subject of strategy implementation challenges and it still continues to attract a lot of attention due to the enormous challenges faced. Muthuiya(2004) studied the strategy implementation challenges at AMREF and the result of his study showed that lack of sufficient communication was a major challenge and that key decision makers should pay regular attention to the implementation process .Koskei(2003) studied strategy implementation and its challenges in public corporations at Telkom Kenya ltd, Githui(2006) studied the challenges for Strategy Implementation in Barclays Bank K ltd and Nyamweya (2004) looked at the subject of strategy formulation and implementation in various organizations in Kenya. These studies generally established that organizations turn to strategic management when faced with turbulent operating environment.Ombati(2007) studied the strategy implementation of workplace policies at Red Cross and found out that the issue of resource allocation was a real impediment to strategy implementation. The problems of strategy implementation relate to situations and processes that are unique to a particular organization even though the problems maybe common to all organizations.

Many organizations operate in different environment and therefore they are compelled to align their strategies to ever changing turbulent situations in order to survive. Management is sensitive to the context in which it is applied and one cannot assume or conclude that strategy implementation challenges are similar across various organizations and industries. Different contexts will yield different results. The fact that failure rate to strategy implementation still remains high justifies the need for more research on these

challenges and suggest possible ways of addressing them. This research will therefore seek to answer the key strategy implementation challenges faced by ActionAid and how it addresses these challenges.

1.3 Research Objectives

The objective of this study will be to:

i.   Determine the challenges of strategy implementation at ActionAid Kenya.

ii. Establish the measures taken to address the challenges faced.

1.4 Value of the Study

The findings of this research will be of immense importance to various parties. First and foremost, to ActionAid, this study will be helpful to the organization in finding out the challenges faced in strategy implementation and what they do to cope with the challenges. It will enable the management to realize the need to come up with strategic plans and ensure their proper implementation.

The study will also provide future information to other managers in various NGO organizations on the way to go about when implementing strategic plans and also provide information to come up with effective monitoring and control systems to mitigate challenges associated with strategy implementation. The findings of the study will be used by future researchers and academicians in areas of strategy implementation challenges and identified knowledge gaps so that they add to existing body of knowledge.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the various pieces of existing theoretical and practical knowledge on strategy implementation challenges. It will help pull together, integrate and summarize what is already known in strategy implementation challenges. Concept of strategy, strategy implementation, factors influencing strategy implementation and strategy implementation challenges have been discussed in this chapter.

2.2 Concept of Strategy

A perspective of strategy is fronted by Kim and Mauborgne(2005) where value innovation is seen as a cornerstone of strategy through the pursuit of differentiation and low cost. The emphasis here is to create uncontested market space and make the competition irrelevant. The overriding focus in red ocean strategy is competition achieved through differentiation or low cost. Described from the competition arena, strategy here is about confronting an opponent and fighting with the need to beat an enemy in order to succeed. Strategy which is a fundamental management tool in any organization is a multidimensional concept that various authors have defined in different ways. It is the match between an organizations resources and skills and the environment as well as the risks it faces and the purposes it wishes to accomplish (Thompson, 1993). It is meant to provide guidance and direction for the activities of the organization.

The purpose of the strategy is to provide directional cues to the organization that permit it to achieve its objectives while responding to the opportunities and threats in the environment.(Pearce and Robinson, 2007)The benefit of strategy is not just offering

simplification and consistency to decision making, but the identification of strategy as the commodity and unity of all the enterprises decision also permits the application of powerful analytical tools to help companies create and redirect their strategies. Strategy formulation produces a clear set of recommendations, with supporting justification that revise as necessary the mission and objectives of the organization, and supply the strategies for accomplishing them. In formulation the process is to try and modify the current objectives and strategies in ways to make the organization more successful. The broadest guidance for the formulation of strategies is stated in terms of matching a forms strength and weaknesses particularly its distinctive competences, to opportunities and risks in the environment (porter,1980).According to Mintzberg (1994) strategy formulation involves several processes. First it involves doing a situational analysis for both internal and external micro-environment and macro-environment. Secondly, creating vision statements with a long term view of a possible future and creating mission statement that spell out the role that the organization gives itself in the society. Thirdly, creating overall corporate, strategic business unit and tactical objectives. Finally a plan with details on how to achieve the objectives is developed.

2.3 Strategy Implementation

Thompson and Strickland, (2002) determined that the strategy implementation process included the many components of management and had to be successfully acted upon to achieve the desired results. It involves organization of the firm's resources and motivation of the staff to achieve objectives. In the world of management increasing numbers of senior staff are recognizing that one of the key routes to improved business performance is better implementation. However, at the same time it also understood that

implementation is one of the more difficult business challenges facing today's managers (Piercy, 1992). Implementing strategies successfully is about matching the planned and then realizing strategies which together aim at reaching the organizations vision. The components of strategy implementation such as communication, interpretation, adoption and action are not necessarily successive and they can't detach from one another. Aosa (1992) observed that strategy implementation is likely to be successful when congruence is achieved between several elements, particularly the organization structure, culture, resource allocation systems and leadership.

Without congruence, major challenges are bound to arise in the process of strategy implementation.The strategic management process does not end when the firm decides what strategy or strategies to pursue. Once the course of strategy has been charted the managers priorities move towards converting the strategic plan into action and good results. Putting strategy into action is seen as an extension of the planning process. A strategy is first formulated and then it is implemented (Johnson and Scholes, 2002). One of the conventions that has led to both scholars and practitioners of strategy management is the idea that there is a distinction between strategy formulation and strategy implementation. The convention holds that the formulation of a strategy is based on identification of the organizations goals and the rational analysis of its external environment and internal resources and capabilities (Grant, 2000). Once a company has chosen a strategy to achieve its goals the strategy then has to be put into action by selecting appropriate organization structure and managing its execution through tailoring the management systems of the organization to the requirements of the strategy (Hills and Jones, 2001). Putting strategy into place and getting individual and organizational

subunits to execute their part of the strategic plan successfully is essentially and administrative task.Strategy implementation involves putting into practice what has been formulated. The process of implementing a strategy in a firm is executed through a number of ways or practices which can be said to be the controls on the firms operations thus they either obstruct or facilitate translation of strategy into action. In organizing for successes, structure is one of the key ingredients, but regardless of any structure, organizations cannot work effectively without the formal and informal organization strategy practices (Johnson and Scholes, 2002). These practices include direct supervision, planning and control systems, performance targets, market mechanisms, social cultural processes and self control and personal motivation.

According to Galbraith and Kazanjian, (1986) there are several major internal subsystems of the organization that must be coordinated to successfully implement the organization strategy. These subsystems include technology, reward systems, decision processes and structure. Irwin(1995) states that strategy implementation is an internal operations driven activity involving organizing , budgeting, motivating, culture building, supervising and learning to make the strategy work. Aosa (1992) observed that good strategies are of no value unless they are effectively implemented and translated into action. Once strategies have been developed they need to be implemented. David (1997) states that strategy will most likely be expressed in high level conceptual terms and priorities. For effective implementation, it needs to be translated into more detailed policies that can be understood at functional level of the organization. The expression of strategy in terms of functional policies also serves to highlight any practical issues that might not have been visible at a higher level. The strategy should be translates into specific policies for

functional areas. Strategic change can most usefully be seen as a continuous process rather than one distinct stage. Quinn, Serge et al (1998) suggested quite clearly that implementation needs to be considered not just as a single event with fixed or rigid plans but rather as a series of activities whose outcome will shape and guide the strategy.

The implementation of organization strategy involves the application of the management process to obtain the desired results(Johnson and Scholes, 2002). Particularly, strategy implementation includes designing the organization's structure, allocating resources, developing information and decision process, and managing human resources, including such areas as the reward system, approaches to leadership, and staffing. Strategy implementation is tough and consumes more time than coming up with the strategy. It is action oriented and involves leadership, motivation, change and creating a fit between the organization structure and the strategy. Kaplan and Norton (2006) observed the importance of matching the structure of the organization to the strategy so as to unlock value. For effective strategy implementation it should be effectively operationalized and institutionalized. The tools for operationalizing and controlling strategy signal an important phase in the process of translating strategic thought into strategic action.

2.3 Factors Influencing Strategy Implementation

Strategy implementation is not an easy process. Many excellent strategies fail when attempts to implement them are made (David ,1997). The implementation phase involves identifying the required resources and putting into place the necessary organizational changes It is important that an organizations daily activities and work efforts directly relate to accomplishing the strategic plan. Thompson and Strickland (2003) state that it is necessary that the organizations strategy is in line with several strategy critical

components. These components include structure, leadership, culture, resources and support systems, and policies.Structure is the division of tasks for efficiency and clarity of purpose and coordination between interdependent parts of the organization to ensure organizational effectiveness. Structure of the firm should be considered with the strategy being implemented. If activities, responsibilities and interrelationship are not organized in a manner that's consistent with strategy chosen, the structure is left to evolve on its own (Pearce and Robinson, 1997).According to Robins and Coulter(2002) an organizational structure is the formal framework in which jobs are divided, grouped and coordinated. Successful strategy implementation depends in large part on the firms' organization structure. The structure identifies the key activities within the firm and the way in which they will be coordinated to achieve the firms' strategic purpose.

Strategic leadership is the ability of one to articulate a strategic vision for the company or part of the company and to motivate others to buy into that vision. Johnson & scholes (2002) state that a strategy leader is an individual upon whom strategy development and change are seen to be dependent on, they are individuals personally identified with, and are central to the strategy of their organizations. Strategy implementation success is directly linked to the unique characteristics, orientation and actions of the CEO. The leadership in an organization will to a large extent determine the success or failure of strategy implementation. According to Pearce and Robinson (2003), two leadership issues are of fundamental importance: the assignment of key managers and the role of CEO as he is most closely identified with and ultimately accountable for a strategy's success and represents an important source for clarification guidance and adjustment during implementation.

Culture is a system of shared meaning and beliefs held by organizational members that determines in a large degree on how they act (Robbins and Coulter,2002). An organizational culture provides the social context in which an organization performs its work and interactions. Aosa(1992) stated that it is important that the culture of an organization be compatible with the strategy being implemented. Culture affects both the way managers behave within organizations as well as the decisions they make about the organizations relationship with the environment and its strategy.Implementation of any strategy requires a substantial amount of organizational resources.

2.4 Strategy Implementation Challenges

Studies have been done on strategy implementation challenges by different authors and scholars and many challenges uncovered. Kim and Mauborgne(2005) identified some of the challenges to be failure to follow the plan, poor communication, inability to predict environmental reaction. Andreas (2004), Kaplan and Norton (2004), Wheelan and Hunger(2008), Thompson and Strickland (2003) state that organization structure, organization culture, leadership, lack of staff motivation are also among some of the challenges faced. Previous research done by Aosa (1992); Ombati (2007); Ronga (2008), also uncovered some more challenges. These challenges are discussed in more detail below.

2.4.1 Lack of Sufficient Communication

The most important problem experienced is lack of sufficient communication. Heinz and Harold(1993), argue that communication is the means by which people are linked together in an organization to achieve a common purpose. It is important in setting out

and agreeing on clear guidelines with the implementers. This is to ensure all involved understand what is expected of them, allow any confusion or ambiguity to be resolved, ensure that the organization is properly coordinated. Before any strategy can be implemented, it must be clearly understood. Clear understanding of a strategy gives purpose of 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 a strategy is one of the obstacles of strategy implementation.

2.4.2 Organization Structure

While 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. According to McCarthy et al (1996), creating that structure and the attendance behavior 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. Changes in strategy often require changes in the way an organization is structured. Organization can be captured by their structures and systems (Johnson and schools, 2002). This is because structure dictates how policies and objectives are established.

Structure shows the way tasks are grouped into jobs and jobs grouped into organizational units. It deploys accountabilities so the company can achieve its goals and objectives and ultimately its mission. The structure can help a strategy to be implemented or it can make it totally impossible. Structure and strategy have to be compatible. Pearce and Robinson

(2000) notes, structures that are designed without regard to strategy can cause strategy to fail regardless of other well intended efforts. According to Chandler(1962) if the structure is not realigned to match the changes in the strategy then this could frustrate the implementation process. Changes in structure should not be expected to make a bad strategy good. Aosa(1992) observed that lack of compatibility between strategy and culture can lead to a high organizational resistance to change and demotivation which can in turn frustrate the strategy implementation. Management should strive to preserve, emphasize and build upon aspects of an existing culture that support new strategic choices.

2.4.3 Lack of employee motivation and commitment

Pearce and Robinson (1991) highlight motivating and controlling personnel in strategy execution are accomplished through a firm's rewards system. Motivation is concerned with the factors that influence people to behave in certain ways and getting them to move in the direction you want to go in order to achieve results. People are motivated when they expect a course of action likely to lead to attainment of a goal and a value reward that satisfies their needs. One of the biggest strategy implementation challenges is to employ motivational techniques that build whole hearted commitment and winning attitudes among employees. Individual behavior and attitudes can be an impediment to strategy implementation. Therefore effective actions must address and consider behaviors attitudes and values of the people in the organization. The behavior of individuals ultimately determines the success or failure of the organizational endeavors and top management concerned with strategy and implementation must realize this. Wheelan and Hunger (2008) hold the view that when the reward systems are out of step with the

strategy execution then implementation is inhibited. The reward mechanism can be both positive and negative as well as short term and long term. Success is celebrated while there are consequences for failures. The reward can be in the form of bonuses, promotions, incentives, recognition.

2.4.5 Inadequate Resources

The resource of an organization includes its human resource skill, the investment and capital in every part of the organization. Therefore lack of resources can be a real challenge to implementation. Thompson et al (1992) notes that the human resource element plays a big role in the design and administration of strategic plans. Their use as a "strategic weapon" to gain competitive advantage is essential together with adequate allocation of material resources to facilitate successful implementation. David (1997) observes that organizations have at least four types of resources that can be used to achieve desired objectives. These are financial, human, physical and technological. A resource fit test should be applied to determine whether firm's resource strengths match the resource requirements of its present business line up. Once a strategic option has been settled upon, management attention turns to evaluating the resource implications of the strategy (Campbel et al, 2002). To achieve a strategy resources are required and need to be allocated and must be adequate and be in line with the expected performance targets. Resource allocation is central management activity that allows for strategy execution. It's not possible to implement a strategy without resources that can be made available by the organization.

2.4.6 Poor leadership

The importance of leadership in strategy implementation highlights the fact that a leader should be at the forefront in strategy execution. Parkinson(2005), leadership is the ability of an individual to influence, motivate and enable others to contribute towards the effectiveness and success of the organization of which they are members. Leadership plays a central role in strategy implementation and if not properly managed poses challenges. Since organizations need people to bring about the necessary changes, strategy implementation therefore requires the assembling of a capable team with the right skills. Pearce and Robinson(2001) notes that the CEO together with key managers must have skills necessary, personalities, education and experience to execute the strategy.

The role of appropriate leadership in strategic success is highly significant. It has been observed that a successful transformation is 70-90 percent leadership and only 10-30percent management. It takes adept leadership to convincingly communicate the new strategy, overcome pockets of doubt and disagreement, and build consensus and enthusiasm for how to proceed. The leadership challenge is to galvanize commitment among people within an organization as well as stakeholders outside the organization to embrace change and implement strategies intended to position the organization. Whether one is distilling strategy to achieve clarity of intent or engaging people to drive the strategy into action process, effective leadership makes the difference.

2.4.7 Organization culture

An organization cultural setting can either facilitate or hinder succesful strategy implementation. Burnes (2004) in his studies on culture, power, politics and change, notes that when an organization environment is rapidly changing situations will arise when its culture is out of step with the changes taking place. Each organization possesses its own culture that is a system of shared beliefs and values. The corporate culture creates and in turn, created by the quality of the internal environment. Andreas (2004) observes that top management principal challenge in the cultural context is set to the cultured tone, pace and character to see if it is conducive to the strategic changes that the executives are charged with implementing. Changing an organization culture to align it with strategy is among the toughest management tasks according to Thompson and Strickland (2003). Changing problem cultures is very difficult because of the heavy anchor of deeply held values and habits. People cling to the old and familiar. It takes concerted management action over a period of time to replace an unhealthy culture with a supportive culture that facilitates strategy implementation

2.4.8 Disconnect between planning and implementation

Kaplan and Norton(2005) found that many organizations have a fundamental disconnect between the formulation of their strategy and implementation of that strategy into useful action. They introduce the notion of strategy mapping which is a diagram that describes how organizations creates values by connecting strategic objectives in explicit cause and effect relationship with each other in the financial, customer, internal processes and learning growth for value creation. One of the practical issues in executing strategy is that

many managers have little experience of planning the implementation of strategies particularly those that are transformational (Hussey 1998). A reasonable achievable time scale is not set during the planning process. The failure of many strategic planning initiatives is due to organizations lacking inertia to sustain them once the initial enthusiasm has worn off.

2.4.9 Resistance to Change

Implementing new strategies requires large scale change (Kaplan and Norton, 2004). Transformational change has emerged to differentiate the scale of change required by business strategy from the continuous improvement that organizations routinely perform. The biggest challenge in implementing strategy is getting alignment throughout the organization and cultivating change initiatives that sustain momentum. Implementing strategic change requires the confidence, cooperation and competencies of the organization technical and managerial people so the continual development of the organization vital asset human resource is very high priority. Another priority is managing change. It's a great challenge to deal with potential barriers to change because implementation efforts often fail when you underestimate these barriers. Experience shows that barriers against implementation of the strategy can lead to a complete breakdown of the strategy. According to Andreas (2004) these barriers are psychological issues ranging from delay to outright rejection and organizations need to pay more attention to them. After all, strategy implementation consists mostly of psychological aspects so by changing the way employees views and practice strategies, senior managers and executives can effectively transform change barriers into a gateway for a successful execution.

2.5 Measures to Address Strategy Implementation Challenges

The importance of diverse corporate culture cannot be understood. To cope with this challenge the management needs to launch a change process to establish a one company unified culture. It should ensure that the leaders have the sensitivity, creativity, patience and communication skills necessary to curb cultural conflicts. It's the strategy makers responsibility to choose a strategy that's compatible with the sacred or unchangeable parts of prevailing corporate culture (Thompson and Strickland, 1989). A lack of mutual trust and respect can be a challenge to strategy implementation and a leader can use such tools as performance and professional growth reward systems to build and regain trust. Each person should be made to understand his role, responsibility and reward for achieving the firms goal and hence success.

Wang (2000) states that communication should be 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 ongoing activity throughout the implementation process. Adequate resources and leverage technology including intranets, blogs, and inquiry centers with well informed assistants should be provided. Also, respect of cultural differences will go a long way in ensuring effective communication.

Effective strategy implementation requires a leader who can influence organization members to focus their efforts in the same direction through team work. The leader and key organizations players like the CEO and the directors should support each other for best results to be achieved. Hrebinak(2005) says that companies often go wrong by creating a cultural distinction between executives who design a strategy and people lower

down in the corporate hierarchy who carry it out. Asking ongoing questions about the status of a plan is a good way to ensure that it will continue to be a priority.Poor strategy implementation can make a sound strategic decision ineffective or a debatable choice successful. It's important to examine the process of implementation of strategy which is comprised of a series of sub activities which are primarily administrative. If purpose is determined then the resources of a company can be mobilized to accomplish it. An organization structure appropriate for the efficient performance of the required tasks must be made effective into information systems and relationships promoting coordination of subdivided activities. The organization process of performing measurements, compensation, management development all this enmeshed in systems of incentives and towards controls must be directed towards the kind of behavior required by organization purpose (Mintzberg, 1994)

The successful approaches to creating a spirit of high performance involve an intense people orientation reinforced at every conceivable way and mirrored down the line people in every activity. The goal is to get everybody in the organization involved and emotionally committed. The idea is try and generate contagious enthusiasm at all levels among employees, utilizing a tough minded respect for the individual employee, a willingness to train each employee thoroughly, a belief in setting reasonable and clear performance expectations and painstaking effort to grant employees enough autonomy to stand out, excel and contribute. An important aspect of creating a results oriented culture is making champions out of the people who turn in winning performances(Peters and Waterman,1985)

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the procedures that will be followed when conducting the study. It involves a blueprint for the type of research design that will be used, the method of data collection and how the data collected will be analyzed.

3.2 Research Design

The research was conducted through a case study as the unit of analysis was one organization. The case study was aimed at getting detailed information on the challenges that ActionAid face during strategy implementation. It was necessary to collect data that allowed an in depth investigation and understanding of the challenges of strategy implementation at ActionAid. Kothari (2004) noted that a case study involves a careful and complete observation of social units. It is a method of study in depth rather than breadth and places more emphasis on the full analysis of a limited number of events or conditions and other interrelations.

3.2 Data Collection

The study used both primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected through the use of an interview guide. The respondents of the study were the International Risk and Disaster Manager, ICT Manager, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, Communications Director, Program Development Manager, Administration Staff Members and the

Country Director because they are involved in the strategy implementation. Secondary data was collected from the organizations document such as annual reports, website and strategic plan. This method of data collection was preferred because it enables the researcher to obtain more up to date information.

3.3 Data Analysis

Data collected was edited for completeness and consistency and then coded to enable the responses to be grouped into various categories. The data was then analyzed by use of content analysis. It made inferences about the antecedents of a communication, about characteristics of a communication and about the effects of a communication. According to Mugenda And Mugenda(2003) the main purpose of content analysis is to study existing information in order to determine factors that explain a specific phenomenon.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses the data and presents the results obtained on the basis of the research objectives set out at the beginning of the study. The study sought to establish the challenges faced by Action aid during strategy implementation and how these were overcome. Data was collected through an interview guide and the respondents in this study were drawn from various levels of staff at Action Aid ranging from the country director, senior management team, and heads of departments to administration staff because they were all involved in strategy implementation at different levels

4.2 Respondents General Information

Section A of the interview guide aimed at establishing the respondents department, the position and length of service in the position. The interviewees consisted of the Country director, communication Director, ICT manager, program development manager, Monitoring and evaluation officer, International Programme manager, I.T Officer, and Administrative coordinator. Most of them have had experience on challenges facing strategy implementation as they have worked in the organization for more than five years. The finding was that all staff was involved in strategy implementation. Of the interviewees ninety percent were head of departments and ten percent were in the middle and lower management. While eighty percent had worked in the organization for more than five years the other twenty percent had less than two years experience. The majority

of the respondents served in the same position since they joined the organization while the others had risen up the ladder. This implies that staffs are occasionally promoted within the organization.

4.3 Strategic Planning at ActionAid

The study sought to establish the existence of a strategic plan at ActionAid, whether the strategic plan formulation process was formal or informal and also whether the organization has a vision mission, core activities and values. It was confirmed that the strategic plan existed which is formulated formally through meetings and communicated to all stakeholders through an official launch of the strategic plan document. The strategic plan at ActionAid covered a period of five years. A consultant was hired in 2010 to assist in developing the strategic plan and he did this together with the staff and managers. Several workshops were conducted with stakeholders to document lessons learnt while implementing the previous strategic plan (2006-2010). Achievements made within the period, gaps noted and challenges experienced were documented. Departmental review was done to understand the performance levels of departments.

It was confirmed that the organization had a mission, vision and core values which were clear to all the employees and that they were well advertised within the organization. It was revealed that at ActionAid the Board of Directors, Heads of Departments, Senior Management Team, Program officers and Consultants were involved in the strategy formulation process and each of them played a different role from each other in the strategic planning process.

It was clear that staff were represented in the strategy formulation process however some felt that they should be more involved rather than just making appearances during the meetings. It was revealed that after the strategic plan is formulated it is then communicated to the staff members and stakeholders though emails, through a series of validation workshops, launching of Strategic plan workshop. When asked how often the strategic plan was reviewed most of the respondents confirmed that the strategic plan was reviewed annually during the period when the annual work plan and budget was being done and at the end of the strategy period. As much as this procedure was carried out annually it was viewed as an exercise that was largely routinely where numbers were changed every year it then became apparent that receiving the strategic plan was a challenge because the document was not amended to cope with changes in the environment and organization. In addition it was felt that there was no evidence that the operational plan was drawn from the strategic plan.

4.4 Challenges faced during Strategy Implementation

The research sought to find out the challenges on strategy implementation being faced by ActionAid. The challenges identified are discussed below.

4.4.1 Organization structure

The researcher sought to find out whether ActionAid organization structure facilitated the achievement of goals. It was confirmed that the structure has frequently been changing to support strategy implementation and that it was designed to breakdown how work is to be carried out in functional departments. The structure was reviewed after some time in line with the organizational demands. Yearly assessment of roles to ensure proper revision of

the structure to be in line with the organizations strategy was done. The current ActionAid structure constitute of the Board of Directors, Senior Management Team, the Country Director, a manager in each key department in the organization. Activities and responsibilities have been organized based on the functions of each department in line with strategies being implemented. The researcher sought to find out if there had been any change in the ActionAid structure since the launch of the strategic plan and it was in agreement that minor changes have been made with regard to position roles and responsibilities to ensure new areas of focus are effectively implemented and monitored. It was found that as structure keeps on changing it has been posing challenges to strategy implementation due to resistance to change, lack of clear communication to prepare those affected.

4.4.2 Employee Commitment to Strategy Implementation

Asked to what extent the staff at ActionAid were committed to strategy implementation, it was revealed that staff commitment was limited to implementing the specific activities in the operational plan derived from the strategic plan, but failed to link these activities to overall goals outlined in the strategic plan. Staff commitment was also limited to implementing areas only relating to their department, and thus there is limited program integration. There was a feeling that all ActionAid staff subscribed to organization principles, beliefs and values and that recruitment processes took on board values and beliefs of employees that are consistent with organizational values however they were not committed because not all of them were involved in strategy formulation process. Employee commitment was not there due to poor motivation and poor remuneration.

4.4.3 Management Involvement in Strategy Implementation

The study sought to find out if management at ActionAid were involved and participating in strategy implementation. It was agreed that management at ActionAid is fully involved in the implementation of the strategic plan and at times considers itself a custodian of the plan because it provides the vision guidance in the implementation of the strategy including the reviews. The mangers provided support for their employees and act as role models in strategy implementation. They made sure that projects were implemented from the drawn strategy and that regular evaluation was done. It was agreed that feedback from issues arising during implementation was given though participatory annual review and reflection process which collects perspective of the staff, partners and the community on the extent to which positive change is taking place, lessons learnt and the challenges and constraints. However there was a feeling felt that there was lack of support from the Senior Management Team and Board of Directors. They cited their attitude as laid back in dealing with governance issues. They expected the SMT to make contributions towards resource mobilization which was not done during the entire implementation period it was largely felt that the board was not available when needed and did not devote enough time to ActionAid.

4.4.4 Organization culture

There was an overwhelming agreement that the culture has a strong influence to strategy implementation. Organizations culture is a company's way of doing things. It constitutes norms, values and beliefs that are held over time in the course of doing business. Match between strategy and culture is crucial for successful implementation of strategy. The

study aimed at establishing how the culture affects strategy implementation and all agreed that the ActionAid culture was supportive of the organizations strategy and that the staff holding key positions were competent to deliver. The cultural factors such as resistance to change and fear of the unknown were dealt with by involvement of senior management and training together with communication of benefits of changing the strategy to all staff. They ensured they took employees through the benefits of changing a particular strategy thus encountering less resistance and maintaining the organization culture.

4.4.5 Inadequate Resources

The study revealed that the budgetary resources were not sufficient to meet organizations objective at ActionAid. There was a budgetary deficit identified during the financial gap analysis. All activities in the strategic plan require a budget and without adequate resources it will be difficult for organizations to successfully execute the strategies. The resource constraints hindered strategy implementation at ActionAid. Furthermore time resource was also highlighted as an impediment. It was argued that when there is time shortage some of the partners quit before the implementation is complete. All agreed that strategy implementation requires availing of all the necessary resources for it to succeed. Available resources were inadequate in some instances forcing projects to be rolled over to the next financial year. Action Aid had an ambitious plan yet it was not possible to implement strategies which require more resources than could be made available. It was noted that too little resources stifled the ability to carry out the strategic plan to the fullest. Sixty percent of ActionAid income is though regular giving and the other forty

percent is through donor funding. The organization has to continually keep on looking for donors to fund proposals.

4.4.6 Communication of the Strategic plan

It was clear that the strategy was communicated to the ActionAid staff and stakeholders. Different methods are used to ensure wide dissemination and roll out of the strategy. It's communicated through meetings, exchange of email and staff retreats, blogs. Management ensured that the communication channels were two way so that it could provide information for improving understanding, knowing the staff responsibilities and to motivate staff. They made sure it was a continuous process in the entire implementation process. It was agreed that organizational communication plays an important role in training, knowledge dissemination and learning during the process of strategy implementation. Communication helped in ensuring that all the stakeholders were involved in the implementation of the adopted strategies and make them more committed. However there was a feeling that the organization left a lot to be desired as such a critical document was not part of the orientation package so they wondered how staffs were supposed to be informed about the strategic direction of ActionAid when there was a limitation in knowledge of sharing of such a critical document.

4.4.7 Leadership

The leadership of ActionAid was at the forefront in providing vision, initiative, motivation and inspiration. It was agreed that they provided the needed guidance and direction towards achieving the targeted results of the ActionAid. The management showed an active team spirit in the strategy implementation process. All the relevant

positions were filled with qualified people and assignment of key managers particularly within the senior management team was done. Rigidity and bureaucracy were not present and they embraced new ideas and innovational technology as required. Leadership training sessions were conducted to instill a set of management competencies. They pointed out various kinds of challenges they faced and how they were able to overcome them thus showing good leadership. An example of the good leadership is how they were able to prioritize strategies based on the finances available vis a vis the urgency to implement the strategy.

4.4.8 Policies and Procedures

Policies and rules practiced at Action Aid serve as a standard operating procedure in facilitating implementation of strategy but it has posed a challenge to strategy implementation as revealed by the study. Especially within the change of context as it calls for regular review of policies to ensure they reflect the strategy. It was indicated that some of the policies presented bureaucracy and were not clear and concise. This had at times led to conflicts between some of the managers where each group accused each other of interfering in their roles thus less being achieved. The departmental and operational manuals were not updated to adequately support strategy implementation and the new way of doing things. Sometimes decisions made are not implemented because staffs do not have clear policies and rules to follow. The new ways of doing things were not incorporated on the standard operating procedures this led to nonachievemt of results in some areas and subjective decisions being made and thus slowed down the rate of implementation. The findings suggested that policies whether new or revised play a

major role in supporting strategy implementation because it assists in controlling organizational activities and counteracts any tendencies of the organization to resist or reject the chosen strategy.

4.4.9 Monitoring and Evaluation of Projects

The study sought to find out whether the projects in ActionAid were continuously being monitored and evaluated to identify gaps and ensure they were in line with the strategic plan. All agreed that projects were continuously monitored and evaluated to identify gaps and ensure they are in line with the strategic plan. The responsibility of monitoring the progress of strategy implementation was guided by the performance management framework and M&E plan. The ActionAid staff interviewed revealed that this process was done through staff retreats and annual work plan meetings. The respondents were also asked to give their opinion on the factors that affected the implementation of their previous plan. Most of them agreed that lack of enough funding and resources, changes in the external environment such as shifts in national policies and shifts in priorities of key stakeholder and program beneficiaries, change in the context of the strategic plan, increased community and stakeholders needs, competing priorities, emerging needs and areas of service delivery that lead to implementing activities outside the strategic plan, lack of accurate baseline data during planning were the factors that affected the strategy implementation for the previous 2006-2010 strategic plan. Resistance to change and slow response to global trends also had an effect on ActionAid strategy implementation. The organization was still basking in the glory of the days when it was able to implement its strategy with a lot of zeal it did not realize the importance of changing so as to adapt to

the environment in which it operated. A lot of time was wasted looking at the past instead of focusing into the future

4.4.10 Resistance from Employees.

Asked whether any resistance from staff and management while implementing the strategic plan, all agreed that there is always a segment of staff resisting some elements of the strategy but it was managed through a consensus and rewarding and recognizing all those who have delivered a higher degree towards achievement of strategy implementation. It was a mixture of support and resistance among the management and staff. There was a lot of support from the Country Director and most senior managers however there were also pockets of resistance from the rest of the staff who feared the unknown and uncertainty and preferred instead to maintain the status quo and continue to remain in their comfort zones. Staff resisted because they doubted whether the skills they had could match with skills requirements for ActionAid dispensation. Management provided training to ensure that employees acquire the technical know how to implement.

4.5 Measures to address Strategy Implementation Challenges

As per the second objective the study sought to determine how Action Aid handled the challenges it encountered during strategy implementation. Action Aid came up with various strategies and initiatives as discussed.

Through the use of a risk management matrix tool. Each strategy has a risk management matrix which projects potential risks and challenges and how to address them. The risk matrix is reviewed regularly to ensure challenges are addressed as it rises. The Board of Directors and Senior Management Team hired a consultant who was charged with the

responsibility of helping the organization achieve its strategic objectives and steering it forward precisely turning the organization around. Organization restructuring was done by declaring some positions redundant and coming up with a lean structure. Some of the positions were also reclassified from regional to country thus saving the organization money in terms of staff emoluments. ActionAid also opted to hire consultants to perform some of the functions thus not having to pay staff benefits such as medical cover and employees' contribution of the provident fund. Interns were hired as cost saving measure as they were cheaper and could help do some of the work under the supervision of experienced staff

Where resistance was experienced in strategy implementation, Action Aid instituted measure to minimize them. It has embraced the idea of involving key stakeholders and increasing stakeholder consultations at initial stages and during piloting of any new project, sensitizing all staff and stakeholders on the importance and benefits of strategies being implemented, conduct change management training programme. In the extreme cases, the reluctant staff were either sacked or transferred.

The study found out that reward systems are not in any way tied to the ability to implement strategies. Action Aid management is in the process of developing an additional reward system that will tie rewards to the successful implemented strategies. ActionAid addressed strategy implementation challenges by scaling up resource mobilization activities, strengthening data collection and management to ensure timely and accurate data, strengthening monitoring activities through training and ensuring the strategic plan is well disseminated and that the strategic plan document was part of the orientation package.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

5.1 Introduction

This final chapter of the study outlines the summary of the research findings, recommendation, limitations of study, suggestions for further research and conclusions. The findings were presented in the respect of the main objectives which were establishing the challenges Action aid encountered during strategy implementation and how these were overcome.

5.2 Summary of findings

The respondents of this study were the Country Director, Communication Director, ICT Manager, Program Development Manager, Monitoring and Evaluation officer, International Programme Manager, I.T Officer, and Administrative Coordinator. These respondents were specifically chosen because they are involved in formulation and implementation of organizations strategic plans and have had adequate experience on the challenges facing strategy implementation since most have work in the organization for more than four years. The Country Director manages leads, directs and shapes a vision for ActionAid Kenya in line with the established policies, principles and operating practices of ActionAid, as well as good management practice and the political, social, cultural & economic environment. The Communication Director plans implements and initiates activities that promote awareness of ActionAids' work among key stakeholders, attract funding to support ActionAid communications through participation in proposal

development and submission. The ICT Manager provides leadership and direction in the provision and delivery of ICT services throughout the organization. Programme Development Manager provides support in the development of strategic plans, program reviews, annual plans and budgets, and design of emergency interventions at the country program level for ActionAid.

The Monitoring and Evaluation officer's role is to develop and implement M&E systems focused on data collection, storage, analysis and reporting to ensure synergy between accountability, learning and planning system, the global monitoring framework and local M&E frameworks. The International Programme Manager develops the Disaster Risk Reduction programme which helps people to better anticipate, reduce and manage disaster risks by incorporating risk reduction measures in development planning and policies. The I.T Officer is tasked with the day to day support of the organizations user desktop problems. And finally the Administrative Coordinator is responsible for providing administrative and financial support to the regional office.

The organizations structure has frequently been changing to support strategy implementation and minor changes have been made with regard to position roles and responsibilities to ensure new areas of focus are effectively implemented and monitored. The structure is reviewed after some time in line with the organizational demands. Staff commitment to strategy implementation is limited to implementing the specific activities in the operational plan derived from the strategic plan and areas only relating to their department, and thus limited program integration. It failed to link these activities to overall goals outlined in the strategic plan.

Management was fully involved in the implementation of the strategic plan and considered itself a custodian of the plan because it provided the vision, guidance in the implementation of the strategy including the reviews. They made sure that projects were implemented from the drawn strategy and that regular evaluation was done. The organizations culture was supportive of the organizations strategy and all staff holding key positions were competent to deliver. The cultural factors such as resistance to change and fear of the unknown were dealt with by involvement of senior management and training together with communication of benefits of changing the strategy to all staff.

Inadequate resources stifled the ability to carry out the strategic plan to the fullest. The budgetary resources were not sufficient to meet organizations objective. All activities in the strategic plan require a budget and without adequate resources it will be difficult for organizations to successfully execute the strategies. Communication of the strategic plan to all the staff and stakeholders was done using different methods are used to ensure wide dissemination and roll out of the strategy. Management ensured that the communication channels were two way so that it could provide information for improving understanding, knowing the staff responsibilities and to motivate staff.

The leadership of the organization was at the forefront in providing vision, initiative, motivation and inspiration. It provided the needed guidance and direction towards achieving the targeted results of the organization. The management showed an active team spirit in the strategy implementation process. Projects were continuously monitored and evaluated to identify gaps and ensure they are in line with the strategic plan. The responsibility of monitoring the progress of strategy implementation was guided by the performance management framework and M&E plan.The policies and procedures

practiced to serve as a standard operating procedure in facilitating implementation of strategy were not regularly reviewed. The departmental and operational manuals were not updated to adequately support strategy implementation and the new way of doing things. A segment of staff resisted some elements of the strategy but it was managed through a consensus and rewarding and recognizing all those who have delivered a higher degree towards achievement of strategy implementation.

To cope with the challenges the organization adopted the use of a risk management matrix tool which projects potential risks and challenges and how to address them. They hired a consultant who was charged with the responsibility of helping the organization achieve its strategic objectives and steering it forward precisely turning the organization around. Organization restructuring was done by declaring some positions redundant and coming up with a lean structure. Where resistance was experienced in strategy implementation, it embraced the idea of involving key stakeholders and increasing stakeholder consultations at initial stages and during piloting of any new project, sensitizing all staff and stakeholders on the importance and benefits of strategies being implemented, conduct change management training program.

The organizations management is in the process of developing an additional reward system that will tie rewards to the successful implemented strategies. It is scaling up resource mobilization activities, strengthening data collection and management to ensure timely and accurate data, strengthening monitoring activities through training and ensuring the strategic plan is well disseminated.

5.3 Conclusions of the Study

Strategy implementation is the end product of strategic planning. Without action, planning is pointless and empty activity. The failure to carry out a strategic plan into the day to day activities of the workplace is a major reason why strategic planning often fails to achieve its objectives. Most organizations have good strategies but successful strategy implementation remains a major challenge. Strategy implementation is concerned with both planning how the choice of strategy is put into effect and managing the change require to successfully implement these strategies. It can be defeated if the attitudes and habits of managers and employees are hostile or at crossroads with the needs of the strategy. To cope with these challenges management needs to launch a change process to establish a one company unified culture. It should ensure that the leaders have the sensitivity, creativity, patience and communication skills necessary to curb cultural conflicts.

5.4 Recommendations of the study

This study recommends a radical change in Action Aid if the organization is to reposition itself to brace competition and deliver results. Active participation of the Board is crucial. The rules of engaging Board members should be clear and the recruitment process professionally done. Use of psychometric test would be commendable to enhance the selection of members with the desirable personalities. The board should be evaluated during the span of their membership or agreed intervals.

The human resource strategy should be linked to the overall organization strategy the organization structure should be changed to support strategy implementation. At this

juncture ineffective staff should be weeded out. Staff should be involved in decision making and action aid should have good recruitment procedures and packages so as to attract the best in order to enforce accountability it would be critical to match skills to jobs. Delivery should be paramount and deadlines must be respected by all, there should be no impunity in the organization.

Lessons learnt from the previous strategic plan should be analyzed and guide the process of the next plan. Mid-term reviews should be set up so that adjustments can be made where necessary and progress of the plan communicated. Communication channels should be improved; there should be better coordination of activities between all departments in the organizations. A staff retreat should be held to engage members in critical thinking which should result in good decisions being made.

There should be budget allocation for the strategic planning process and implementation the plan should be communicated to all, monitoring of the strategy implementation process should be done by a team. The strategic planning process should be consultative in nature, led by clear policies. It's important for the strategic planning process to be owned by the stakeholders. In addition ActionAid should have a resource mobilization strategy to implement the strategic plan. Once the strategy has been agreed upon, the organization needs to change the structure so as to support the strategy implementation process.

To avoid these problems from reoccurring again in future, ActionAid needs to ensure that the strategy formulation should be made participatory by involving all staff as well other stakeholders. This will enrich ownership of the final strategy as well as facilitate smooth

successful implementation. Strategy is clear and concise and therefore employees can read on their own and understand what is expected of them and work towards achieving the organizational objectives. Although not all employees are involved in strategy planning in the organization they are part and parcel of it and therefore they would all want to see that the strategy is successful.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Research

It is generally agreed universally that no research is an end in itself. Therefore what this research has achieved can only be considered to be little hence requiring further work. From the insight gained in the course of the investigations, there is need to carry out further research in the organizations that are similar to ActionAid in terms of size and areas of intervention. Findings can then be compared to assess if there are any commonalities or unique factors. There is also need to study the practices adopted to evaluate the progress towards strategy implementation within NGOs in Kenya.

5.6 Limitations of the study

Limitations must be encountered in all research studies therefore this one was not an exception to that. Difficulties of securing a face to face interview with some of the targeted respondents were experienced mainly because of their busy schedule.

The study was also limited to an in depth case study of ActionAid hence findings are unique to this organization and cannot therefore be generalized to be a representation of similar organization in the industry.

5.7 Implication on Policy, Theory and Practice

Organizations are increasingly experiencing challenges in implementing their strategies and this raises questions with regard to the theory of strategy and its related process. This calls for extensive examination of the current process of developing strategy. Most institutions engage in elaborate strategic planning process while forgetting that strategy is about synthesis while planning is more of analysis. It is thus important to reconsider the process and practice of by which strategies are created and the roles that can be played by planners. The current strategic planning practice and process may result to the current challenges in strategy implementation as the process does not capture the common institutional long term vision and goals. There is need to examine how the process can impact on institutional commitment, narrow organizational vision, discourage change, and breed an atmosphere of politics. Also the ever increasing importance of knowledge and the general recognition of knowledge as the strategic asset in most organizations, raise important question whether traditional strategy theory and practice provide adequate knowledge of the organization. Most institutional strategies are time bound thus organizational discontinuity and easily are predicted, and these strategies are developed by external strategist who is most at times detached from the operations of the organization. These two strategic planning practices may result to effective strategy implementation.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: INTERVIEW GUIDE

This aim of this Interview Guide is to collect information on the challenges of strategy implementation challenges at ActionAid.The information is required for academic purposes only and will be treated as confidential.

Section A: Background

Name of Department………………………………………………………………………

Designation………………………………………………………………………………..

Number of years worked in the position……………………………………………….

Section B: Establishing existence of a Strategic Plan

1. Does the organization have a vision, mission and core values?

2. Does Action Aid have a strategic plan? If yes what period does it cover?

3. Who is involved in the strategy formulation process at ActionAid?

4. What is your role in the strategic planning process?

5. How was the current strategic plan communicated to the staff?

6. Are staff represented in the strategy formulation process?

7. How often is the strategic plan reviewed?

Section C: Strategy implementation and its challenges

1. Does the organization structure facilitate the achievement of goals?

2. Has there been any change in the organization structure to accommodate new strategies?

3. What factors affected strategy implementation for the strategic plan 2006-2010?

4. To what extent are the employees committed to strategy implementation?

5. How would you rate the level of management involvement and participation in strategy implementation?

6. Is the ActionAid culture supportive of the organizations strategy?

7. Are the staff holding key positions competent to deliver?

8. Are the budgetary resources sufficient to meet organizations objectives?

9. Is there sufficient communication to all stakeholders regarding the strategic plan?

10. Do you get feedback from staff regarding issues arising during implementation?

11. Do you give feedback to your team?

12. Does staff have access to information required to work effectively?

13. Does the ActionAid leadership create an environment conducive for implementation of strategic plan?

14. Does existing policies (guidelines, rules, procedures) pose any challenges in facilitating strategy implementation?

15. Is there good coordination and sharing of responsibilities towards strategy implementation?

16. Are projects continuously monitored and evaluated to identify gaps and ensure they are in line with the strategic plan?

17. Did you experience any resistance from management and staff while implementing the strategy?

18. What is the organization doing to overcome the strategy implementation challenges?

Thank you!