



## INFLUENCE OF STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT ON PERFORMANCE OF WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME PROJECTS IN JUBA, SOUTH SUDAN.

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### ABSTRACT

The paper investigates the influence of stakeholder involvement on performance of world food programme projects in Juba, South Sudan. The study was guided by the Stakeholder Theory. The target population consisted of 113 individuals associated with World Food Programme (WFP) projects in Juba, South Sudan including WFP employees, local leaders and organizational partners, beneficiaries, government entities at various levels, and international partners, including donors and NGOs. Stratified random sampling method was used to determine an appropriate sample size from the target population of 113 individuals involved with World Food Programme (WFP) projects in Juba, South Sudan. To achieve a 95% confidence level with a 5% margin of error, the sample size was calculated to be approximately 87 participants. Data was collected through structured questionnaires and interviews. Quantitative data underwent analysis, including descriptive and inferential statistics like Pearson correlations and regression analysis, using SPSS version 27. Stakeholder involvement emerged as a crucial factor in WFP project performance. The study reveals that stakeholder involvement positively impacts the performance of World Food Programme (WFP) projects in Juba, South Sudan. The effective involvement of WFP employees in project planning contributes to better project execution, if stakeholders are adequately consulted, although there is room for more comprehensive engagement. Beneficiaries' needs are well understood and addressed, enhancing project relevance and sustainability. Government entities provide timely support, aligning projects with national policies, while international partners contribute effectively through funding and expertise, ensuring project viability. The study recommends increasing the depth and breadth of stakeholder consultation throughout project implementation, involving more structured meetings with local leaders, community representatives, and organizational partners. Implementing robust feedback mechanisms to continually assess and respond to beneficiaries' needs is essential. Encouraging greater community involvement in decision-making processes by establishing advisory boards and including local representatives in planning committees will build local ownership.

**Keywords:** Stakeholders; Stakeholder Involvement; Stakeholder Performance; World Food Programme; Juba; South Sudan;

## **BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

The World Food Programme (WFP) operates in some of the most challenging environments across the globe, aiming to alleviate hunger and improve food security for vulnerable populations. In South Sudan, the situation is particularly dire due to prolonged conflict, economic instability, and climate-related challenges. The WFP's projects in Juba are designed to provide critical food assistance, improve nutrition, and enhance the resilience of communities. However, the success of these projects is heavily dependent on various factors, with stakeholder involvement being a crucial element. Understanding the influence of stakeholder participation on project performance is essential to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of these humanitarian efforts.

Stakeholders in WFP projects include a wide range of individuals and groups, such as local communities, government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), donors, and the beneficiaries themselves. Each of these stakeholders plays a unique role, from planning to implementation of the world food programme. Their involvement can significantly impact the projects' outcomes by enhancing transparency, accountability, and local ownership. Effective stakeholder engagement ensures that the projects are aligned with the needs and priorities of the communities they aim to serve, thereby increasing their relevance and impact.

Despite the recognized importance of stakeholder involvement, there are still gaps in understanding how different types and levels of participation influence project performance in specific contexts like Juba, South Sudan. Challenges such as insecurity, logistical constraints, and cultural differences can affect the degree and quality of stakeholder engagement. This study seeks to explore these dynamics, providing insights into the mechanisms through which stakeholder involvement affects the performance of WFP projects. By identifying best practices and potential obstacles, the findings aim to contribute to the design of more effective and inclusive humanitarian interventions in conflict-affected regions.

## **EMPIRICAL REVIEW**

Stakeholder involvement has become a pivotal element in the successful implementation of humanitarian projects worldwide. In regions facing complex emergencies, such as Juba, South Sudan, the participation of stakeholders is crucial to ensure that interventions are relevant, effective, and sustainable. The World Food Programme (WFP), a leading humanitarian organization, undertakes numerous projects aimed at addressing food insecurity and enhancing livelihoods in South Sudan. However, the success of these projects largely hinges on the active engagement of various stakeholders, including beneficiaries, local communities, government entities, and international partners. In the UK, stakeholder involvement has been shown to significantly enhance project outcomes. Rabanal (2012) emphasizes that active engagement with stakeholders leads to improved project planning, execution, and evaluation. By involving stakeholders early in the project lifecycle, organizations can ensure that the needs and expectations of all parties are considered, leading to higher satisfaction and project success rates (Rabanal, 2012). This approach not only mitigates risks but also fosters a collaborative environment where continuous feedback and adjustments are possible, thereby enhancing project performance.

In Ghana, the impact of stakeholder involvement on project performance has been explored in various development projects. According to Mensah and Jason (2018), involving local communities and stakeholders in project planning and implementation phases significantly enhances project outcomes. The study highlighted that when stakeholders are engaged, there is a greater sense of ownership and commitment, which leads to better resource utilization and project sustainability (Mensah & Jason, (2018). This is particularly important in the context of development projects where local buy-in is crucial for long-term success. In Kenya, the role of stakeholder involvement in project performance has been well-documented, particularly in the context of humanitarian and development projects. Njogu (2020) conducted a comprehensive study on the impact of stakeholder engagement on the performance of WFP projects in Kenya. The study revealed that active stakeholder participation led to improved project design and implementation. Njogu emphasized that stakeholder involvement is critical in identifying potential challenges and developing mitigation strategies, which ultimately enhances project performance and sustainability (Njogu, 2020).

Juba has been at the epicenter of conflict and instability, which has severely impacted its development and humanitarian efforts. The persistent insecurity, coupled with infrastructural deficiencies and limited access to basic services, has created a complex environment for project implementation. To this context, the involvement of stakeholders becomes even more critical to ensure the success and sustainability of projects aimed at addressing the urgent needs of the population. Despite these challenges, Juba remains a focal point for various humanitarian organizations, including the World Food Programme (WFP), which operate extensive projects to provide food security, nutrition, and livelihood support to vulnerable communities. The effectiveness of these projects heavily relies on the engagement and cooperation of multiple stakeholders, including local government authorities, community leaders, beneficiaries, and international partners. Stakeholder involvement in Juba is essential not only for the alignment of project objectives with local needs but also for fostering of trust and collaboration among all parties involved. This participatory approach is crucial in navigating the complex socio-political landscape and ensuring that humanitarian efforts are both effective and sustainable.

The study, is aimed at exploring the extent to which stakeholder engagement impacts the performance of WFP initiatives. By examining the mechanisms and outcomes of stakeholder involvement, this research seeks to provide valuable insights into how inclusive approaches can enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of humanitarian efforts in conflict-affected regions. Through a comprehensive analysis of WFP projects in Juba, this study will contribute to the broader understanding of best practices in stakeholder management within the context of humanitarian aid.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: STAKEHOLDER THEORY**

Stakeholder Theory, developed by R. Edward Freeman (1984), posits that the success and sustainability of an organization are heavily dependent on its ability to manage relationships with its diverse stakeholders. Unlike traditional business models that prioritize shareholders,

Stakeholder Theory broadens the scope to include any group or individual that can affect or be affected by the organization's objectives. This theory is particularly relevant in the context of humanitarian projects, such as those conducted by the World Food Programme (WFP) in Juba, South Sudan, where the involvement of various stakeholders—ranging from local communities to international donors—is crucial for achieving project goals and ensuring long-term impact.

Freeman's Stakeholder Theory has been widely discussed and expanded upon in various contexts since its inception. Donaldson and Preston (1995) provided a foundational analysis of the theory, categorizing it into three perspectives: descriptive, instrumental, and normative. The descriptive aspect of Stakeholder Theory explains how organizations function with respect to their stakeholders, the instrumental perspective examines the potential benefits of stakeholder management in achieving organizational goals, and the normative perspective emphasizes the ethical obligations organizations have towards their stakeholders. These perspectives collectively highlight the multifaceted nature of stakeholder relationships and the importance of addressing stakeholders' interests to foster organizational success and sustainability.

In the realm of project management, particularly in the humanitarian sector, the application of Stakeholder Theory has shown significant benefits. Bourne and Walker (2005) explored the implications of effective stakeholder management in large-scale projects, noting that the identification and engagement of key stakeholders are critical for project success. Their research emphasized that understanding stakeholders' needs and expectations can lead to better project outcomes, as it helps in aligning project objectives with stakeholders' interests. This alignment not only enhances the relevance and acceptance of the project but also promotes transparency and accountability. In the context of WFP projects in Juba, such an approach can lead to improved project performance by ensuring that the initiatives are well-received and supported by the local communities they aim to benefit.

### **Research Design**

Descriptive research was chosen as research design based on its suitability for employing instruments like questionnaires to gather quantitative data. By utilizing this approach, the researcher collected data on stakeholder involvement on world food programme and their impact on the performance of World Food Programme projects in Juba, South Sudan.

### **Target Population**

The target population for this study comprises a diverse group of 113 individuals associated with World Food Programme (WFP) projects in Juba, South Sudan. This includes WFP employees who manage and implement project activities, and stakeholders such as local leaders and organizational partners who influence strategic directions. Beneficiaries, the primary recipients of aid, provide insights into the effectiveness and impact of the interventions, while local communities offer perspectives on the broader implications of the projects. Government entities, at various levels, facilitate coordination and ensure alignment with national policies, and international partners, including donors and NGOs, contribute essential funding and expertise. By encompassing these

varied groups, the study aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of how stakeholder involvement influences the performance and sustainability of WFP projects in this conflict-affected region.

### Sample Size

The study used a stratified random sampling method to determine an appropriate sample size from the target population of 113 individuals involved with World Food Programme (WFP) projects in Juba, South Sudan. To achieve a 95% confidence level with a 5% margin of error, the sample size was calculated to be approximately 87 participants.

**Table 1: Sample Size**

Subgroup	Number of Participants	Percentage of Sample
WFP Employees	20	23%
Stakeholders	15	17%
Beneficiaries	25	29%
Local Communities	15	17%
Government Entities	7	8%
International Partners	5	6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source:** WFP Juba Regional Office (2023)

### Research Instrument

The study utilized both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data was collected using structured questionnaires designed for WFP Employees, stakeholders and beneficiaries, interview schedules for government entities and international partners. Both tools were employed to gather data for objective. The questionnaire collected quantitative data and was divided into two thematic sections. Section A gathered data on demographic characteristics of the respondents, while sections B to G collected data related to the five variables of the study. The questionnaire employed a Likert scale approach of questioning. The utilization of a questionnaire allowed for the collection of data from a large number of respondents, thus enhancing the generalizability of the findings (Babbie, 2016). Furthermore, the questionnaire provided a platform for the respondents to offer honest and accurate responses to sensitive questions due to the maintained anonymity (Bryman, 2016). Additionally, the questionnaire facilitated the standardization of data collection, effectively reducing bias and augmenting the reliability of the findings (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2016). The design of the questionnaire was aligned with the research objectives. In the qualitative research context, interview schedules were employed to collect data through structured interviews. Interview schedules are renowned for standardizing questions, gathering detailed data, and elevating the reliability and validity of the study (Shukla & Gupta, 2021).

## FINDINGS

### **Response Rate**

From a total of 87 sample size, a total of 82 which is equal to (94.25 %) responded to the study questioners and interviews. This means that 5 (5.74%) of the respondent did not participate in the current study. From this the study respond rate was 94.25%.

### **Descriptive Statistics for Stakeholder Involvement**

Table 4 resents the findings related to stakeholder involvement at World Food Programme (WFP) projects. The data was collected from various projects in in Juba South Sudan, and the participants were asked to rate their level of agreement with statements related to stakeholder involvement in performance of world food programme projects. The responses were recorded using a five-point Likert scale: (SD) strongly disagree, (D) disagree, (N) neutral, (A) agree, and (SA) strongly agree. The mean score ( $\mu$ ) and standard deviation (Std. Dev) for each statement are also provided to offer additional insights.

**Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Stakeholder Involvement**

<b>Statement</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std.</b>
The involvement of WFP employees in project planning was clear and effective.	7 (10.6%)	8 (12.1%)	9 (13.6%)	16 (24.2%)	26 (39.5%)	3.70	1.38
Stakeholders were adequately consulted during project implementation.	3 (4.6%)	13 (19.7%)	18 (27.3%)	16 (24.2%)	16 (24.2%)	3.44	1.19
The needs and priorities of beneficiaries were well-understood and addressed.	8 (12.1%)	7 (10.6%)	10 (15.2%)	16 (24.2%)	25 (37.9%)	3.65	1.40
Local communities actively participated in project decision-making.	8 (12.1%)	6 (9.1%)	13 (19.7%)	20 (30.3%)	19 (28.8%)	3.55	1.33
Government entities provided timely support and cooperation throughout the project.	7 (10.6%)	9 (13.6%)	9 (13.6%)	25 (37.9%)	16 (24.3%)	3.47	1.28
International partners contributed effectively to project success.	6 (9.1%)	10 (15.2%)	10 (15.2%)	23 (34.8%)	17 (25.7%)	3.47	1.27
<b>Overall Mean</b>						<b>3.55</b>	

**Source: Research Data (2024)**

The study findings revealed that a mean of 3.70 with a standard deviation of 1.38 of the respondents suggested that the involvement of WFP employees in project planning was clear and effective. With a mean of 3.44 and a standard deviation of 1.19 of the respondents suggested that stakeholders were adequately consulted during project implementation. The study also found out that a mean of 3.65 with a standard deviation of 1.40 of the respondents revealed that the needs and priorities of beneficiaries were well-understood and addressed, a mean of 3.55 with a standard

deviation of 1.33 of the respondents suggested that local communities actively participated in project decision-making. The study further revealed that a mean of 3.47 with a standard deviation of 1.28 of the respondents revealed that the government entities provided timely support and cooperation throughout the project while a mean of 3.47 with a standard deviation of 1.27 of the respondents revealed that international partners contributed effectively to project success. Majority of the respondents ascertained that the involvement of WFP employees in project planning was clear and effective.

## **CONCLUSION**

The study reveals that stakeholder involvement positively impacts the performance of World Food Programme (WFP) projects in Juba, South Sudan. The involvement of WFP employees in project planning is effective, contributing to better project execution. Stakeholders are adequately consulted, though there is room for more comprehensive engagement. Beneficiaries' needs are well understood and addressed, enhancing project relevance and sustainability. Local communities actively participate in decision-making, fostering ownership and cultural appropriateness. Government entities provide timely support, aligning projects with national policies. International partners contribute effectively through funding and expertise, ensuring project viability.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations are made to enhance stakeholder involvement and improve the performance of World Food Programme (WFP) projects in Juba, South Sudan:

1. Increase the depth and breadth of stakeholder consultation during all phases of project implementation. This includes more frequent and structured meetings with local leaders, community representatives, and organizational partners to ensure diverse perspectives are consistently integrated into project decisions.
2. Implement more robust feedback mechanisms to continually assess and respond to the needs and priorities of beneficiaries. This could involve regular surveys, focus group discussions, and community forums to gather detailed insights and adjust project activities accordingly.
3. Encourage greater community involvement in decision-making processes by establishing community advisory boards and including local representatives in planning committees. This will help build local ownership and ensure that projects are culturally appropriate and better received.
4. Enhance coordination with government entities at all levels by establishing formal partnerships and regular communication channels. This can help align WFP projects with national development plans, ensure smoother regulatory and logistical support, and foster collaboration with international partners by sharing best practices and leveraging their technical expertise and resources.



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