

## **The Role of Public Relations in sensitizing public on Government Projects in Kenya: Case of Nairobi County**

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### **Abstract**

Public relations is a vital tool for the government because it emphasizes on democracy and good governance. This study sought to establish the role of public relations tools in sensitizing the public on government projects in government ministries in the Central Government in Nairobi. Specifically, the study examined: the effects of media relations on sensitizing the public on government projects in Nairobi County, Kenya; the effects of community relations on sensitizing the public on government projects in Nairobi County, Kenya; the effects of sponsorships on sensitizing the public on government projects in Nairobi County, Kenya; the effects of community events on sensitizing the public on government projects in Nairobi County, Kenya. For this study, the researcher used descriptive survey design. The target population comprised heads of departments in state corporations in Kenya which totals 162. This study was a census survey of all 162 state corporations in Kenya. The unit of analysis comprised all the state corporations whereas the unit of observation consisted of 162 heads of departments (Public Relations Officers) of each State Corporation, thus forming a sample size of 162 respondents. Primary data was collected using questionnaires as the main data collection instruments. The study also collected data using an interview schedule. SPSS version 20 was adopted in the analysis of quantitative data. Data was presented in the form of pie charts, graphs and tables. Themes were used to analyze qualitative data. The study found that media relations positively and significantly influence sensitisation on government projects; community relations positively and significantly influence sensitisation on government projects; sponsorships positively and significantly influence sensitisation on government projects and community events positively and significantly influence sensitisation on government projects. The study, therefore, recommends that stronger communication mechanisms should be installed and well integrated in the system to ensure easier and convenient dissemination of information to the public. PR department of any organisation contributes to its development and enhances customer's satisfaction. In this line, the study recommends that strong and well

integrated PR department should be installed in an organisation and therefore should be sufficiently funded to ensure its success. Further, the study recommends that organisations should devise ways and means to maintain a long-term commitment with clients.

**Keywords:** *Corporate communication relations, community events, media relations, public relations, sponsorship.*



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## **Introduction**

The need for Public Relations (PR) services worldwide has gained prominence in the last 10 years. This is as a result of the increased competition in foreign markets among multinational companies (Petersen, 2010). Western based multinational companies like the Coca-Cola, international banks and many more are expanding their businesses to hitherto uncharted territories while using PR to build relationships with their publics. As a result of the increased trade between nations of the world and need to sensitize, support and promote government development projects, practices of PR are becoming internationalised (Tindall, 2010).

According to Bernays (2013), Public Relations are described as a way of persuading the public to provide support to an institution, activity and movement. Former president of American PR association, George Meredith refers to PR as anything that contributes in attaining a suitable opinion (Hallahan, 2010). Though the main aspects of public relation dates back to the ancient Greeks and Egyptians, the public relations aspect today is a twentieth century phenomenon whose existence is largely from the advent of the industrial revolution in United States and Europe (Jaques, 2010).

In most situations, Public Relations are very critical in the resolution of conflicts among organisations and groups. Similarly, it is important to note that public relations also play an important role in achievement of the company's goals, like

maintaining the reputation of the firm and also marketing of products and services (Mbeke, 2011). According to Bronn (2014), in Africa, investing in PR would assist the government institutions to accomplish each objective smoothly and effectively. Van Heerden and Rensburg (2009) contend that public relations do not only motivate public involvement but also results in better sensitisation of government projects. Effective public relations can help in enhancing sensitisation of the government development projects. In situations of adverse publicity or in case the government is under crisis on development projects, advanced public relations can get rid of misunderstanding and develop a mutual understanding between the government and the public on the development projects (Asunta, 2016).

In Kenya, President Uhuru Kenyatta gave a directive on communicating and sensitizing the public on government achievements and projects with the aim of ensuring that the public gets involved in policy formulation, implementation and feedback on the quality of service delivery (Oneya, 2010). Despite all these efforts, there is little appreciation of the importance of public relations in sensitizing the public on government projects. This is evidenced by the fact that public relations officers are not part of the top management teams that make decisions including policies and regulations that would need to be communicated to the public (Omondi, 2012).

This underscores the role of Public Relations in sensitizing the public on government projects, since there is limited participation in decision making process. Also, the absence of the public relations departments and use of non-technical personnel as public relations officers in some government projects portrays low appreciation of the public relations function (Njuru, 2011). Interestingly however, there seems to be no remarkable change in the implementation of different government projects despite the presidential directive, hence the low sensitisation level among the public on government projects (Mbogo, 2011).

In spite of the high number of government projects being done Kenya, there has been growing concern on the low sensitisation of these projects among the public (Mbeke, 2011). There is a growing concern for instituting public relations in sensitizing and promoting government projects in Kenya. Therefore, this study sought to establish the role of public relations in sensitizing the public on government projects in Nairobi County, Kenya.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Public relation is a vital tool for the governments in an attempt to foster good governance and ensuring democracy. The Government has adopted public relations to help news media in covering important activities (Coombs, 2015). However, (Ogolla, 2011) identifies poor usage of media and low awareness of public relations tool as some of the challenges the use public relations in promoting governance faces.

As a result, there is, low sensitisation, mistrust and negative perception amongst the public in relation to government institutions, making it difficult to promote governments projects because of the way the public relations function has been handled in a non-professional manner, (Omondi, 2012).

In the government institutions, there is little appreciation of the role played by Public Relations tools in sensitizing the public on government projects (Kiambi, 2010). This is evidenced by the fact that public relations officers are not part of the top management teams that make decisions including policies and regulations that would need to be communicated to the public. This underscores the role of public relations in sensitizing the public on government projects, since there is limited participation in decision making process (Njuru, 2011).

Empirical studies done in Kenya include; Omondi (2012) studied on the public relations performance in governmental ministries in Kenya. Karani (2012) did a study on the role of public relations in enhancing institutional image: a case study of the ministry of lands. Anyijuka (2016) studied on the role of PR in promoting government development programmes: a case study of microfinance support center limited in Kampala. Despite the importance of the public relations in sensitizing government projects, there is limited empirical evidence on the role of public relations in sensitizing the public on government projects, hence the research gap. It is against this backdrop that the study sought to fill the existing research gap by conducting a study to establish the role of public relations tools in sensitizing the public on government projects in government ministries in the Central Government in Nairobi.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The general objective of the study was to establish the role of public relations tools in sensitizing the public on government projects in government ministries in the Central Government in Nairobi.

The study was guided by the following specific objectives;

- i. To examine the effects of media relations on sensitizing the public on government projects in government ministries in the Central Government in Nairobi.
- ii. To assess the effects of community relations on sensitizing the public on government projects in government ministries in the Central Government in Nairobi.
- iii. To determine the effects of sponsorship on sensitizing the public on government projects in government ministries in the Central Government in Nairobi.

- iv. To establish the effects of community events on sensitizing the public on government projects in government ministries in the Central Government in Nairobi.

### **Significance of the Study**

The study findings are important to management of government institutions as they will understand the role of public relation in sensitizing the public on government projects. This assists them in designing public relation strategies that will help them in sensitizing the public on various government projects; this increases the public awareness on government projects.

The findings of the study are of great use to the policy makers since it provide them with knowledge on the role of public relations in sensitizing the public on government projects. This helps them in creating policies aimed at improving implementation of governments by first sensitizing the public.

The study is useful to other academic researchers seeking to investigate on public relations and the role it plays in sensitizing the public on government projects. It essentially provides them with information and data concerning the practices and the gaps therein.

### **Theoretical Framework**

#### **Theory of Value**

The theory of value of public relations was developed by the International Association of Business Communication team who begun by assessing the theory of social responsibility, resolving conflict and ethical issues in businesses. They posit that public relations is valuable both in individual organisations and also the society at large. Grunig, Grunig and Ehling (1992) posit that the IABC team notes that effective corporations are those who identify and accomplish objectives that are essential to them and the public interest in their business environment. Further, through assisting firms to improve relationships and resolve conflicts among organisations and the public, the department of public relations facilitates effective implementation of projects.

By incorporating a qualitative study and survey research, fourteen generic factors of efficient public relations were identified; they were later put together to form ten generic factors. The principles include: incorporating strategic management in public relations; dominant coalition PR empowerment or senior managers direct reporting association; public relation integrated function and ensuring that public relation is a function of the management which is distinct from other functions. Organisations are using the PR function to support other departments like marketing, HR, finance, law; the head of PR is a manager and not a technician, information

technicians are vital in conducting the daily communication tasks; a PR model which is symmetrical is essential; the internal communication should be a symmetrical system; management role knowledge; diversification of roles; excellent organisation context (Grunig, Grunig&Ehling, 1992)

An effective Public relation department is one in which is participative in nature other than authoritative, activist pressures in the environment and organic other than structures of mechanical management. The theory was preferred for the study because it emphasizes on roles of public relations tools function in project. These were core concerns of the study.

#### **Four Models of Public Relations**

The four models of Public Relation were developed by Grunig and Hunt (1984). The models describes the various fields of management and practices in the organisation. The models also guide in creation of tactics, programmes and strategies. These models serve as guidelines to create programmes, strategies, and tactics. The models include; two-way symmetrical model, press agent/publicity model, public information model and two-way asymmetrical model.

The model of Press agent or Publicity involves the use of persuasion by communication professions to influence the opinions and thoughts of target audience. Precision is not essential and firms are not concerned with the feedback from the audience and they do not carry out a research on analysis of the audience. The mode of communication is one way. For instance, the propagandist system developed in North Korea news media outlets (Grunig& Hunt, 1992).

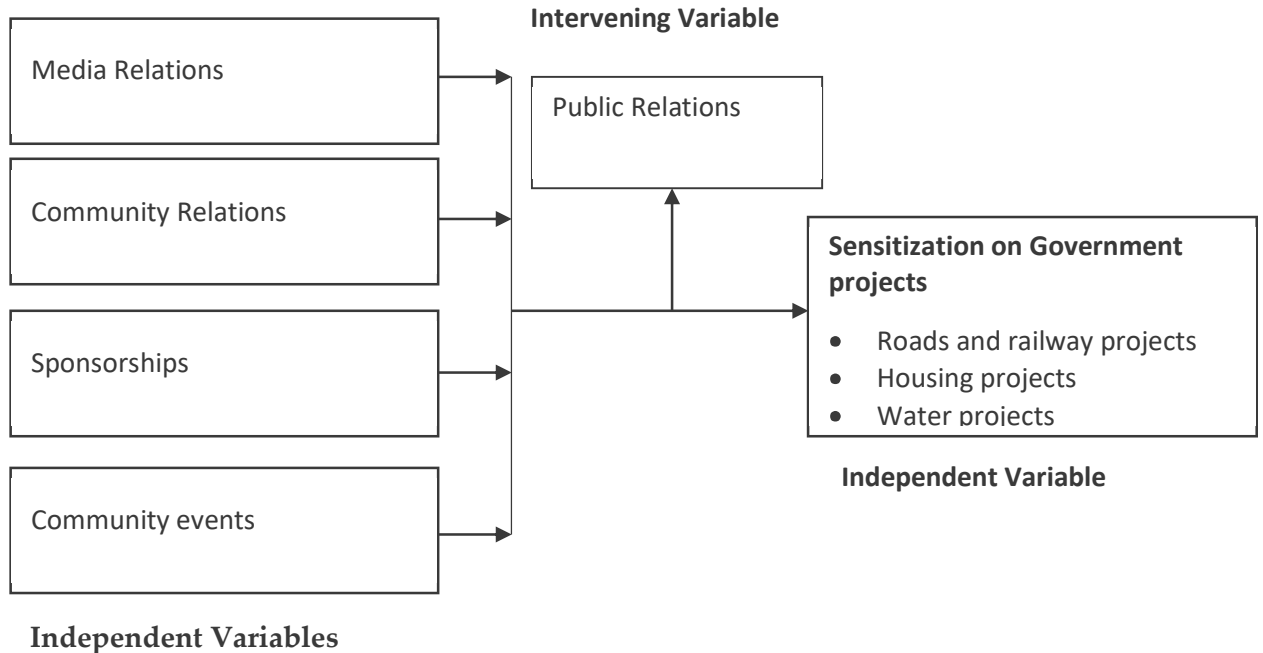
The model of Public information does not involve manipulative activities like those in the press agent but provides accurate data. Moreover, one way communication is adopted. An audience analysis is not conducted by practitioners to provide guidance in tactics and strategies. This model helps in creating press newsletters and releases, in situations where audiences are not mainly targeted or studied beforehand (Grunig, Grunig& Dozier, 2002).

The model of Two way symmetrical is highly scientific persuasive hence a better method of communication with target audience. A research is conducted by content creators to improve the understanding of the behaviors and attitudes of audience, these guides strategy and creation of messages. This model makes use of persuasive communication which is beneficial to the firm than targeted persons; so, it is imbalanced or asymmetrical. This model is used mainly in consumer marketing and advertising, which are aimed at improving the profits of the organisation (Grunig, Grunig& Dozier, 2002; Simpson, 2014).

Finally, the model of two way symmetrical notes that the practitioner of public relations should be a link between the firm and the public, other than persuader. Practitioners act as negotiators and communication is adopted to make sure that every

involved person is benefiting, not only the firm that employ them. The symmetrical word is adopted because it helps in creating a mutual beneficial condition (Simpson, 2014). This model was most ethical; therefore, professions should desire to use it in daily strategies and tactics.

### Conceptual Framework



### Media Relations

The focus of media relations is creating relationships with media and to determine those who are interested in the firm’s story. Public relations are linked to publicity and show the significance of functions of the media. The government organisations initiate publicity and provide suitable media information. An effective association between public relation personality and editor is developed through public relation individual reputation for professionalism, honesty and accuracy. In case the reputation is lost, the functioning of the public relation becomes ineffective as the association between the public and the government (Raupp&Hoffjann, 2012).

The people practicing PR in government institutions are both professionals and nonprofessionals and not enough practitioners hold professional values. PR as a profession has the infrastructure for a true profession. Not enough practitioners in

this institutions hold professional values and most of the public relations training programmes emphasize communication techniques rather than management. It is reported that opportunities for people joining the public relations profession today have never been matched in the history of the profession. In order to develop professional career in public relations, there is need for continued exposure to the public relations body of knowledge (Grunig, & Hunt, 2009).

### **Community Relations**

Community relations are a progressive process needed in the lifecycle of a project. Effective community relation can be beneficial to the community and cover essential dividends like avoidance or reduction of delays as a result of unresolved community issues. Community relations can be seen as a way of developing a mutual beneficial and lasting association among the community and the developer, with consistent feedback about every project in the decision making part, from development, constructions and operations (Riel, 2012).

The role of community relations is to monitor and manage contractors and sub-contractors defiance with activities and performance commitment, agreements made locally and community specific requirements all through the projects. It also ensures that the project and community goals are aligned, provide ideas and resources needed to enhance the cost of the project and performance schedule, create an area to support project funding and commitment of agency and the positive image of the project grows through the support of the community (Northouse, 2010).

### **Sponsorships**

Community projects support and provision of local sports and community activities sponsorships improves the association with the community and is a sign that the company is social responsible (Argenti, 2012). A sponsor can be referred to as a person or a group provides support in a person, activity or an event, in form of funds or product and services. The aim of sponsorship is to develop goodwill and the recognition of a brand. Organisations understand their budget and key audience prior undertaking sponsorship tasks. Globally, numerous events are taking place and they give marketers opportunities for sponsorship. An organisation can provide equipment's for a sport's team in return to brand recognition. Other sponsors cater for television broadcasts which have the logo or name of their firm (Cox, Brammer & Millington, 2010).



### **Community Events**

A business should be seen as a responsible citizen of the community it operates in. A comprehensive community relation programme should focus on building a respectable image for the company in the community in the long run. Many organisations implement programmes for improving quality of life of the community members. Such activities help to build their reputation along with benefiting the society (Deep house, 2017). A firm can organize special events to make the organisation products and the firm public. In the events, involve activities like dinner, party as well as performances of set stunts. This attracts reporter's attention and the personnel in public media and the firm a good coverage of its products or services. Public relation managers collaborate with event managers' professionals to make sure the programmes are successful and intended information gets to the media and the public (Green, 2017).

### **Public Sensitisation**

According to Baron (2012) sensitisation is creation of awareness and providing information to an individual. Public Sensitisation encompasses dissemination of information to the public by the government through various mediums. Successful public sensitisation requires steady information recurrent in varied materials and stressed through interpersonal contact and through mass and local media channels. Therefore, it is vital that project managers through public relations officers to have a proper plan, implementation strategy, and enough resource efforts for community mobilisation.

### **Empirical Review**

Boakye, Celestinatabi, and Awuah (2012) carried out a review on how public relations contribute in attaining the goals of the organisation in tertiary institutes in Ashanti. The research sought to assess how public relation practices contribute to organisation goals in tertiary institutes. The objective was to determine the role of public relation practices determine public relation practitioner's functions and determine ways of improving public relations in private tertiary institutions. The study used Christian Service University College, Ghana Baptist University College, Garden City University College and University College of Management Studies as selected cases. The study sought for the views of individuals who play the role of public relation practitioners in the identified private tertiary institutions. The study found that three out of the four target institutions there is no public relations department. The study also found that all the four tertiary institutions agree that public relation is very essential in dealing with the external and internal publics of the various universities in achieving the organisational goals. The study was carried out in Ghana and focused on influence of

public relation in realizing organisational objectives while this study focuses on sensitisation.

Anyijuka (2016) studied the Role of public relations in promoting government development programmes with special focus on Microfinance Support Centre Limited in Kampala. The study employed three data collection tools questionnaire, key informant interview and secondary data source. The findings revealed campaigns, lobbying, propaganda, professional ethics, and corporate social responsibility as PR practices while product promotion, special event management, crisis management, and managing adverse publicity were cited as means of integrating public relations. Implementation of public policy, government activities coverage, reporting to citizen on agency actions, and rise in internal unity of the agency affects public relations. There is an association between Government Development Programmes and media ( $r=0.011, 0.310, 0.380$ ). The study concluded that very minimal data is available regarding the public relations practice in Ugandan government institutions, given the fact that some institutions do not have fully established public relations units. The study was conducted in Kampala and it focused on Microfinance Support Centre Limited. This current study will be conducted in Kenya and will focus of sensitisation of government projects.

Karani (2012) investigated the role of public relation in enhancing institutional image in the Department of Lands: Ministry of Lands. The study was descriptive in nature where the researcher carried out a survey on the role of public relations in enhancing institutional image in the Ministry of Lands. The target population for this study consisted of both the customers and the employees in the Ministry of Land. Stratified random sampling technique was used to draw respondents from the population. The study used Job Groups in the Department of Land as the strata where a sample of 651 respondents was drawn on a pro rata from each stratum. The researcher used questionnaires as primary sources to collect the data. Data collected from respondents was both quantitative and qualitative in nature. From the study the researcher therefore concludes that, the ministry of Lands has been charged with a mandate which does not have the capacity, or the necessary funding, to manage this efficiently. The longer the Ministry grapples with lack of capacity, the more the ills being perpetrated on the ground, which will in essence keep this country forever on the path of correcting past errors and calling for reform. The study focused on role of public relations in enhancing institutional image and the study was conducted in Ministry of Lands. This current study will focus on sensitizing the public on government projects and will cover all ministries.

Omondi (2012) studied the public relation practices performance in Kenyan government ministries. The goal was to determine the relevance, the place and effect of public relations in departments and ministries in the government. The investigation aimed to find out if public relation officers effectively play their roles, factors that

impact on the performance of PR and give recommendations on how to enhance PR activities in government ministries. A survey study method was used. The sample was obtained from government ministries and departments and it was 79 PR officers. Purposive sampling was adopted. It was revealed that PR practices highly affect government departments and ministries. 19% of respondents noted that PR practice had a wide effect on companies while others PR effects on organisation were average. Two percent noted that PR practices have a low effect in the firm. The study focused on determining Performance of Public Relations Practices while this current study will focus on their role in sensitizing the public on government projects.

Shamsan and Otieno (2015) studied how strategic PR affects performance in the organisation in the Red Cross Society of Kenya. The goal was to determine how strategic PR affects performance in the firm. The questionnaire was used to obtain primary data from staff in the Kenya Red Cross Society. A review of literature was conducted to determine the impact of PR on firm performance. Analysis was done using descriptive statistics. Results showed that strategic PR significantly affects firm performance. This study was focused in Kenya Red Cross Society and focused on its role on firm performance. The study failed to cover the role of PR in sensitizing the public on government projects in Nairobi County, Kenya

### **Methodology**

A descriptive survey design was used in this research. The descriptive study design was adopted because it improves the understanding on the features of a group in a specific situation, provide ideas for further review and assist in making decisions (Sekaran, 2003). The study population comprised of head of departments in Kenyan state corporations which totals to 162 (ISC Report, 2016). These state corporations are further subdivided into categories which include financial (20), regulatory (30), commercial/manufacturing (30), learning institutions (32) and service (50). The study sampling frame was the list of 162 state firms obtained from the ISC Report 2016. The heads of departments were picked as the study respondents.

This study was a census survey of all 162 state corporations in Kenya (ISC Report, 2016). The choice of census survey is because practicality, cost and representation and the survey nature plus population is put into consideration. The unit of analysis comprised of all the state corporations whereas the unit of observation consisted of 162 Head of department (Public Relations Officers) of each State Corporation, thus forming a sample size of 162 respondents. Members of the public were also sampled to take part in the study. This was the business community members in Nairobi County. They were randomly selected with the help of the business community leaders. These individuals were considered to have the relevant information on whether they are sensitised about the government projects.

Data collection will be by use of questionnaires. The questionnaire had open ended and close ended questions while the quantitative section format was nominal and Likert type scale. The questionnaires were self-administered with the help of research assistants. After data collection, cleaning of data was conducted to determine the inaccuracy, incompleteness of the data and to enhance the quality by correcting omissions and errors detected. Data was then coded and analysed using a computer system. SPSS version 20 helped in coding of data. Quantitative data analysis was by use of descriptive statistics frequencies and percentage. Data presentation was by use of pie charts, graphs and tables. Qualitative data was analysed using the content analysis method. This refers to the process of categorizing verbal or behavioral data to classify, summarize and tabulate the data.

### Data Analysis

The study selected a sample of 162 respondents but the researcher was able to receive back only 147 having been fully filled; it formed a response rate of 90.7%.

### Media Relations

**Table 1: Media Relations on Sensitizing the Public on Government Projects**

Statements	Mean	Std. Dev.
The government maintains a good relationship with the media	3.980	0.697
The internet is used in communicating roads, housing and water government projects to the public	3.946	0.738
The media is an efficient way of communicating roads, housing and water government projects to the public	3.891	0.694
The media has improved the sensitisation of the public on roads, housing and water government projects	3.864	0.708
The media helps in communicating roads, housing and water government projects to the public	3.776	0.850
The media uses the print media to communicate roads, housing and water government projects to the public	3.735	0.855
The media uses broadcast media to communicate roads, housing and water government projects to the public	3.694	0.679

From the findings presented in Table 1, respondents agreed that the government maintains a good relationship with the media (M=3.980, SD=0.697); the internet is used in communicating roads, housing and water government projects to the public (M=3.946, SD=0.738); the media is an efficient way of communicating roads, housing and water government projects to the public (M=3.891, SD=0.694); and that the media

has improved the sensitisation of the public on roads, housing and water government projects (M=3.864, SD=0.708). The study also established that the media helps in communicating roads, housing and water government projects to the public (M=3.776, SD=0.850); the media uses the print media to communicate roads, housing and water government projects to the public (M=3.735, SD=0.855); and that the media uses broadcast media to communicate roads, housing and water government projects to the public (M=3.694, SD=0.679).

Respondents were also asked to indicate other effects of media relations on sensitizing the public on roads, housing and water government projects. They explained that Public Relations influence the opinion of the public. Professionals on PR influences the public by introducing new products and revamping the image of existing products, showcasing and building a brand, caring and valuing employees, advertising financial aspects to current and potential investors, and managing a crisis to do damage control. Media is the channel that the government uses when communicating publicly.

Interviewed respondents indicated that their organisation engages in media relations. The focus of media relations in their organisation is creating relationships with media and to determine those who are interested in the firm’s story. Being a government organisation, it initiates publicity and provides suitable media information. Interviewees were also asked to explain how media relations sensitize the public on roads, housing and water government projects in Nairobi County, Kenya. Media relation agencies guarantee a level of coverage that consolidates relationships with journalists. They explained that media relations allow their organisation to liaise with the media in order to inform the public of their client’s practices, achievements, mission, policies and sometimes even their very existence. It also provides the public with press coverage of the company and the progress in projects.

The study findings agree with Anyijuka (2016) that there is an association between Government Development Programmes and media. She added that campaigns, lobbying, propaganda, professional ethics, and corporate social responsibility are PR practices while product promotion, special event management, crisis management, and managing adverse publicity are means of integrating public relations.

## Community Relations

**Table 2: Community Relations on Sensitizing the Public on Government Projects**

Statements	Mean	Std. Dev.
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Community relations help in identifying suitable methods of sensitizing the public on roads, housing and water government projects	3.993	0.567
Public understanding on roads, housing and water government projects is enhanced through community relations	3.959	0.584
Community relations helps in improving community understanding on roads, housing and water government projects	3.952	0.565
Community relations improves communication between the government and community members	3.912	0.758
The public are meant to know the importance of roads, housing and water government projects	3.850	0.686
Community relations helps to communicate the project goal	3.837	0.820

Findings presented in Table 2 show that respondents agreed that community relations help in identifying suitable methods of sensitizing the public on roads, housing and water government projects (M=3.993, SD=0.567); public understanding on roads, housing and water government projects is enhanced through community relations (M=3.959, SD=0.584); and that community relations helps in improving community understanding on roads, housing and water government projects (M=3.952, SD=0.565). Respondents also agreed that community relations improves communication between the government and community members (M=3.912, SD=0.758); the public are meant to know the importance of roads, housing and water government projects (M=3.850, SD=0.686); and that community relations helps to communicate the project goal (M=3.837, SD=0.820).

Respondents were also asked to indicate other effects of community relations on sensitizing the public on roads, housing and water government projects. They explained that if community relations are effective, it benefits the community and covers essential dividends like avoidance or reduction of delays as a result of unresolved community issues. They are also important in developing mutual beneficial and lasting association among the community and the developer, with consistent feedback about every project in the decision making part, from development, constructions and operations.

Interviewees were asked to indicate whether their organisation engage community relations. They indicated that community relations are practiced in their organisation. They explained that community relations are important because it is a progressive process needed in the lifecycle of a project. They were also asked to indicate how community relations sensitize the public on roads, housing and water government projects in Nairobi County, Kenya. Community relations is used by the

organisation in monitoring and managing contractors and sub-contractors defiance with activities and performance commitment, agreements made locally and community specific requirements all through the projects. It also ensures that the project and community goals are aligned, provide ideas and resources needed to enhance the cost of the project and performance schedule, create an area to support project funding and commitment of agency and the positive image of the project grows through the support of the community.

The study findings agree with Omondi (2012) that PR practice had a wide effect on companies while others PR effects on organisation were average. The investigation also established that public relation officers effectively play their roles, and that public relation is very essential in dealing with the external and internal publics in achieving the organisational goals.

### Sponsorships

**Table 3: Sponsorship on Sensitizing the Public on Government Projects**

Statements	Mean	Std. Dev.
Sponsorships helps to provide strategic communications advice about roads, housing and water government projects	4.000	0.776
Sponsorships promotes a strong and trusting relations between the organisation and the public	3.986	0.662
Sponsorships help in building and managing long-term relationships with the public	3.986	0.549
Sponsorships promote information dissemination on roads, housing and water government projects	3.959	0.403
Sponsorships shows support and guidance needed to improve awareness on roads, housing and water government projects	3.837	0.722
Sponsorships encourage public involvement in roads, housing and water government projects	3.830	0.725

Findings presented in Table 3 show that respondents agreed that sponsorships helps to provide strategic communications advice about roads, housing and water government projects (M=4.000, SD=0.776); sponsorships promotes a strong and trusting relations between the organisation and the public (M=3.986, SD=0.662); and that sponsorships help in building and managing long-term relationships with the public (M=3.986, SD=0.549). Respondents also agreed that sponsorships promote information dissemination on roads, housing and water government projects (M=3.959, SD=0.403); sponsorships shows support and guidance needed to improve awareness on roads, housing and water government projects (M=3.837, SD=0.722) and

that sponsorships encourage public involvement in roads, housing and water government projects (M=3.830, SD=0.725).

Respondents were also asked to indicate other effects of sponsorships on sensitizing the public on roads, housing and water government projects. Sponsorship develops goodwill of the organisation. Sponsorship also provides funds that allow accomplishment of projects set by the organisation. Sponsors also cater for television broadcasts which have the logo or name of their firm and this helps inform the public on progress of projects.

Interviewees indicated that their organisation support sponsorships. They indicated that their organisation deals with community projects and therefore, it support provision of community activities sponsorships which go a long way to improve the association with the community and is a sign that the company is social responsible. They were also asked to indicate how sponsorships sensitize the public on roads, housing and water government projects in Nairobi County, Kenya. Sponsorships have both trading objectives and communication objectives. Trading objectives mainly refer to securing merchandising rights at events. They added that even though sponsorships are expensive, they are growing in popularity as their organisation seeks to strengthen its corporate image, increase their brand awareness, differentiate their products, and reach their target markets.

The study findings agree with Karani (2012) that organisations which do not have the capacity, or the necessary funding, have the mandate to manage efficiently. The longer the Ministry grapples with lack of capacity, the more the ills being perpetrated on the ground, which will in essence keep this country forever on the path of correcting past errors and calling for reform.

## Community Events

**Table 4: Community Events on Sensitizing the Public on Government Projects**

	Mean	Std. Dev.
Community events increases the level of acceptance of government projects	3.946	0.882
Community events ensures active involvement in government projects	3.898	0.792
Community events helps the community to feel that they are part of government projects	3.898	0.792
Community events provides the opportunity of communicating government projects	3.810	0.894
Community events improves support of government projects	3.762	0.917



Findings in Table 4 show that the respondents agreed that community events increases the level of acceptance of government projects (M=3.946, SD=0.882); community events ensures active involvement in government projects (M=3.898, SD=0.792); community events helps the community to feel that they are part of government projects (M=3.898, SD=0.792); community events provides the opportunity of communicating government projects (M=3.810, SD=0.894); and that community events improves support of government projects (M=3.762, SD=0.917).

Respondents were also asked to indicate other effects of community events on sensitizing the public on roads, housing and water government projects. They explained that the events are focused on building a respectable image for the company in the community in the long run. The organisations have implemented programmes that improve the quality of life of community members. Through such activities they help to build their reputation along with benefiting the society. They added that their organisations organize special events to make the organisation products and the firm public.

Interviewees were asked to indicate how community events sensitize the public on roads, housing and water government projects in Nairobi County, Kenya. They explained that some of the programmes that their organisations use dinner, party as well as performances of set stunts. This attracts reporter’s attention and the personnel in public media and the firm a good coverage of its products or services. Public relation managers collaborate with event managers’ professionals to make sure the programmes are successful and intended information gets to the media and the public.

The study findings agree with Shamsan and Otieno (2015) that strategic PR significantly affects firm performance and that public relations enhances organisations image. In addition, implementation of public policy, government activities coverage, reporting to citizen on agency actions, and rise in internal unity of the agency affects public relations.

### **Sensitizing the Public on Government Projects**

**Table 5: Sensitizing the Public on Government Projects**

<b>Statements</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>
The public are appreciating the roads, housing and water government projects	3.959	0.835
The public have been able to monitor the roads, housing and water government projects	3.959	0.748

The public have been able to give their opinion on the quality of roads, housing and water government projects	3.905	0.788
There is enhanced acceptance of roads, housing and water government projects by the public	3.837	0.836
There is improved understanding on roads, housing and water government projects	3.830	0.762

Findings presented in Table 5 show that respondents were in agreement that the public are appreciating the roads, housing and water government projects (M=3.959, SD=0.835); the public have been able to monitor the roads, housing and water government projects (M=3.959, SD=0.748); the public have been able to give their opinion on the quality of roads, housing and water government projects (M=3.905, SD=0.788); there is enhanced acceptance of roads, housing and water government projects by the public (M=3.837, SD=0.836); and that there is improved understanding on roads, housing and water government projects (M=3.830, SD=0.762).

The study findings concurs with Baron (2012), that successful public sensitisation requires steady information recurrent in varied materials and stressed through interpersonal contact and through mass and local media channels. Therefore, it is vital that project managers through public relations officers to have a proper plan, implementation strategy, and enough resource efforts for community mobilisation.

### Correlation Analysis

**Table 6: Correlations**

		Sensitisation	Media Relations	Community Relations	Sponsorships	Community Events
Sensitisation on Government Projects	Pearson Correlation	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
	N	147				
Media Relations	Pearson Correlation	.776*	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.033				
	N	147	147			
Community Relations	Pearson Correlation	.690**	.096	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.246			
	N	147	147	147		

Sponsorships	Pearson Correlation	.781**	.173	.428	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.036	.000		
	N	147	147	147	147	
Community Events	Pearson Correlation	.775**	.056	.023	.055	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.782	.510	
	N	147	147	147	147	147

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The value of the correlation coefficient lies between -1 and 1 where a correlation coefficient of between 0.0 and 0.39 is considered to be 'weak', between 0.40 and 0.59 is considered to be moderate, while 0.6 and above is considered to be 'strong'. From the findings in Table 6, media relations are seen to have a strong positive significant relationship with sensitisation on government projects ( $r=0.776$ ,  $p\text{-value}=0.033<0.05$ ). Community relations is also seen to have a strong positive significant relationship with sensitisation on government projects ( $r=0.690$ ,  $p\text{-value}=0.000$ ). The findings also showed that sponsorship had strong positive significant relationship with sensitisation on government projects ( $r=0.781$ ,  $p\text{-value}=0.000$ ). Finally, community events were seen to have strong positive significant relationship with sensitisation on government projects ( $r=0.775$ ,  $p\text{-value}=0.000$ ). Based on these findings, it can be observed that media relations, community relations, sponsorships and community events have significant relationship with sensitisation on government projects.

### Multiple Regression Analysis

**Table 7: Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.749 <sup>a</sup>	.561	.548	.27321

a. Predictors: (Constant), Community Events , Community Relations , Sponsorships , Media Relations

From the findings presented in table 7, the value of adjusted  $R^2$  is 0.548 which suggests that 54.8% of variation in sensitisation on government projects can be explained by changes in media relations, community relations, sponsorships and community events. The remaining 45.2% implies that other than the variables included in the model, there are other factors that can be used to explain variations in sensitisation on government projects. The findings further suggest that the variables being investigated in the study are strongly and positively related as indicated by correlation coefficient (R) value of 0.749.

**Table 8: ANOVA**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	13.528	4	3.382	45.309	.000 <sup>b</sup>
1 Residual	10.599	142	.075		
Total	24.127	146			

a. Dependent Variable: Sensitisation on Government Projects

b. Predictors: (Constant), Community Events , Community Relations , Sponsorships , Media Relations

From the findings presented in table 8, the significance level of the model generated was 0.000. This suggests that the model was significant because the p-value obtained (0.000) was less than the selected level of significance (0.05). The findings further show that the F-calculated value (45.309) from the ANOVA table was greater than the F-critical value ( $F_{4,142}=2.435$ ) obtained from the F-distribution tables. This suggests that the model was significant and that the variables media relations, community relations, sponsorships and community events can be used to predict sensitisation on government projects.

**Table 9: Coefficients**

Model	Unstandardised		Standardised	t	Sig.
	Coefficients		Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.234	.311		3.966	.000
Media Relations	.258	.073	.321	3.551	.001
1 Community Relations	.310	.034	.567	9.147	.000
Sponsorships	.139	.043	.200	3.207	.002
Community Events	.246	.072	.302	3.389	.001

a. Dependent Variable: Sensitisation on Government Projects

From the findings presented in table 9, the following regression equation was fitted;

$$Y = 1.234 + 0.258 X_1 + 0.310 X_2 + 0.139 X_3 + 0.246 X_4 + \varepsilon$$

From the equation above, it can be seen that when all the other variables (media relations, community relations, sponsorships and community events) are held to a constant zero, sensitisation on government projects will be at a constant value of 1.234.

The finding also show that media relations has significant influence on sensitisation on government projects ( $\beta=0.258$ ,  $p=0.001$ ). The findings further show that media relations have positive influence on sensitisation on government projects. These findings suggest that media relations positively and significantly influence sensitisation on government projects. Therefore, a unit increase in media relations will result to an increase in sensitizing the public on government projects in government ministries in the Central Government in Nairobi by 0.258 units.

The finding also show that community relations has significant influence on sensitisation on government projects ( $\beta=0.310$ ,  $p=0.000$ ). Further, the findings show that community relations have positive influence on sensitisation on government projects. These findings suggest that community relations positively and significantly influence sensitisation on government projects. Therefore, a unit increase in community relations will result to an increase in sensitizing the public on government projects in government ministries in the Central Government in Nairobi by 0.310 units.

Regarding sponsorships the study found that community relations has significant influence on sensitisation on government projects ( $\beta=0.139$ ,  $p=0.002$ ). Further, the findings show that sponsorships have positive influence on sensitisation on government projects. These findings suggest that sponsorships positively and significantly influence sensitisation on government projects. Therefore, a unit increase in sponsorships will result to an increase in sensitizing the public on government projects in government ministries in the Central Government in Nairobi by 0.139 units.

The study finally showed that community events has significant influence on sensitisation on government projects ( $\beta=0.246$   $p=0.001$ ). The findings further showed that community events have positive influence on sensitisation on government projects. These findings suggest that community events positively and significantly influence sensitisation on government projects. Therefore, a unit increase in community events will result to an increase in sensitizing the public on government projects in government ministries in the Central Government in Nairobi by 0.246 units.

## **Conclusions**

The study found that media relations have significant influence on sensitisation on government projects. The study also found that media relations have positive influence on sensitisation on government projects. These findings suggest that media relations positively and significantly influence sensitisation on government projects.

Based on these study findings, the study therefore concludes that a unit increase in media relations will result to an increase in sensitizing the public on government projects in government ministries in the Central Government in Nairobi.

The study also found that community relations have significant influence on sensitisation on government projects. Further, the findings showed that community relations have positive influence on sensitisation on government projects. These findings suggest that community relations positively and significantly influence sensitisation on government projects. Based on the study findings, the study concluded that a unit increase in community relations will result to an increase in sensitizing the public on government projects in government ministries in the Central Government in Nairobi.

Regarding sponsorships, the study found that community relations have significant influence on sensitisation on government projects. Further, the study found that sponsorships have positive influence on sensitisation on government projects. These findings suggested that sponsorships positively and significantly influence sensitisation on government projects. Therefore, from the study findings, the study concluded that a unit increase in sponsorships will result to an increase in sensitizing the public on government projects in government ministries in the Central Government in Nairobi.

The study finally found that community events have significant influence on sensitisation on government projects. The study further showed that community events have positive influence on sensitisation on government projects. These findings suggested that community events positively and significantly influence sensitisation on government projects. Therefore, the study concludes that a unit increase in community events will result to an increase in sensitizing the public on government projects in government ministries in the Central Government in Nairobi.

### **Recommendations**

Media relations had positive significant influence on sensitizing the public on government projects. The study therefore recommends that stronger communication mechanisms should be installed and well integrated in the system to ensure easier and convenience in dissemination of information to the public.

Community relations had positive significant relationship with sensitizing the public on government projects. PR department of any organisation contributes to its development and enhances customer's satisfaction. In this line, the study recommends that strong and well integrated PR department should be installed in an organisation and therefore should be sufficiently funded to ensure its success. Further, the study recommends that organisations should devise ways and means to maintain a long-term commitment with clients.

Sponsorships were found to have positive significant influence on sensitizing the public on government projects. The study therefore recommends the government to provide funds to facilitate completion of projects; such funds include CDF which is enough to meet the growing demand for projects. Similarly, the government should allocate more funds to this project to improve its affordability.

Community events were seen to have positive significant influence on sensitizing the public on government projects. The study recommends the organisation to embrace more community events. There is need for CDS program to be rolled out because it increases knowledge, attitude and practices of community members for reporting; this will enhance success rate of government projects.

### **Suggestions for Further Studies**

The general objective of this study was to establish the role of public relations tools in sensitizing the public on government projects in government ministries in the Central Government in Nairobi. The study recommends that further research be done on the relevance and impact of PR practice in government. It also recommends that research be carried out to find out the linkage between the lack of a national communication policy framework and the formulation of communication strategies by various ministries.

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