

**IMPACT OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION ON DEVELOPMENT  
PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY: A CASE STUDY OF NGORONGORO  
DISTRICT, ARUSHA**

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE  
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**2025**

## CERTIFICATION

The undersigned has read and hereby recommends for acceptance by the Open University of Tanzania a dissertation entitled: "*Impact of community participation and involvement on development projects sustainability:a case of Ngorongoro district Maasaii community, Arusha*" in partial fulfilment of requirements for the degree of Masters of Arts in Monitoring and Evaluation, of Open University of Tanzania

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I, **Crispo Ndembeka**, declare that the work presented in this study is original. It has never been presented to any other university or institution. Where other people's works have been used, references have been provided. It is in this regard that I declare this work as originally mine. It is hereby presented in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Degree of Master of Arts in Monitoring and Evaluation (MAME).

.....  
Signature

.....  
Date

**DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to my family and my classmates.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

This dissertation is a result of the cooperative efforts of many individuals. The limitation of space permits only a few to be mentioned. First and foremost, I am grateful to the living God for his gracious love and endless blessings he accorded me when doing this study. Secondly, I extend my sincere heartfelt gratitude to my supervisor Professor Deus. D.P. Ngaruko for his caring heart, cordial support and thoughtful guidance to me. His constructive criticism, informed guidance advice, patience, encouragement, and unwavering support have made this dissertation what it is. I appreciate his concern and contributions to this study.

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## ABSTRACT

This study assessed the Impact of community participation and involvement on development projects sustainability. The study used mixed research approaches to assess the participation of communities in project development sustainability in Ngorongoro district in Arusha region. Through a sample size of 267 respondents participated in the study. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected for this study. Methods of primary data collection involved semi-structured interviews, in-depth interviews, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and observation. Secondary data were obtained in the documentary sources related to study objectives. The study findings on objective one, revealed that majority of respondents agreed that they participated on development projects. However, participation was limited to implementation rather planning phase of the project circle. Findings on objective two, showed a strong correlation between community participation and positive sustainability outcomes. Findings on the specific objective three showed that, lack of technical skills and financial capacity are constraining factors to communities' participation in development projects. However, active monitoring was found to be an enabling that mediates the influence of community participation on development project sustainability. The study recommends the use of a structured participatory project planning; Implementing organizations should formalize and standardize community participatory as compulsory component of project cycle; Implementing organizations must prioritize long-term capacity building especially financially and technically to the local community.

**Keywords:** *Community Participation, Development Projects, Sustainability, Ngorongoro District*

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATION**

HRD	Human Resource Development
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Science
LGRP	Local Government Reform Program
O & M	Operation and Maintenance
REPOA	Research on Poverty Alleviation
ADB,	African Development Bank
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
NGO	Non-Government Organization
UN	United Nations
AFDB	African Development Bank
KWTF	Kenya Women Finance Trust

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

The problem of how to keep projects sustainable arises at national, regional, and global development organizations(Ditlev-Simonsen and Ditlev-Simonsen, 2022).

Community participation is one of the most effective strategies for creating new projects and exhibitions as well as for enabling more efficient service delivery to a diverse population. Complete community involvement in development initiatives, according to Davids et al. (2009), results in capacity building, making the community better capable of selecting, carrying out, overseeing, and assessing developmental projects.

Policy makers and practitioners of rural development are increasingly addressing issues through the use of the term "community consultation." Similarly, there has been an increase in critiques of other people's interpretations and the definitions of terms, and the outcomes of widespread practice have been called into doubt or even disparaged (Booth, 2005; Cornwall, 2004). As a process, community engagement or consultation has evolved into a "slogan" and fundamental component of all development projects in poor nations.

Fung (2002) defines participation as the process through which stakeholders "influence and share control over development strategies, the resources and decisions which affect them." It also refers to the active involvement of the community, particularly the disadvantaged groups like the disabled, women, elderly, children, and the poorest of the poor, in the decision-making, implementation,

planning, and evaluation of their development work plan (Kinyashi, 2008 & Ofuoku, 2011).

In Africa, communities participation in project development is not a new phenomenon (Musavengane et al., 2019). For instance Shanker (2004) noted that community -based natural resources management in Africa has rooted in history since before- colonial period, as societies had the culture of conserving natural resources surrounding them for the co- benefits under the key organization of elders of each community. Similarly, Forje et al. (2022) found that Eco-tourism in the Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) were more sustainable due to local communities' participation. However, according to World Food Program (2015) noted that the current local communities' participation in project management and development in the Africa particularly the SSA is lacking proper coordination among the key stakeholders including communities surrounding projects. For that cause most projects in the SSA regions are not sustainable.

Studies on communities' participation on project development sustainability have been conducted in Tanzanian context since time in memorio URT (2013). For example, Ngwegwe (2007) and Kyessi (2002) conducted a study on community participation in upgrading urban infrastructure in Dar es Salaam. The study found that community participation was not the primary actor for implementing, identifying, monitoring and evaluating the development project. Therefore they recommended that local participation' should be the active actor in every phase of project development in order to achieve sustainability. Likewise, Madon et al. (2018) noted that Tanzania is endowed with a lot of natural resources but the key challenges is

how to manage and access them sustainably through communities participation. Authors further asserted that communities participation increase benefits on project development for today and tomorrow's generation because the community is the key beneficiary of any project adjacent to them. In addition, community have a voice and be accountable to the project development (Ofori, 2008 and Sonowabo, 2009).

Project development and sustainability through communities' participation is also important in Ngorongoro district (Mbowe et al., 2021; Ronoh et al., 2022). Studies (Charnely, 2005; Mkiramweni et al., 2017; Kairung, 2019) showed that there are different projects for development in Ngorongoro district. For instance, Kairung (2019) found cultural tourism in the area that local communities participated in one way or another. Equally, Mbowe et al. (2021) found that Ngorongoro district has ecotourism activities that communities and other stakeholders participated in managing them. According to Ronoh et al. (2022) there are persistent of human-wildlife conflicts in Ngorongoro area due to little integration among the key stakeholders. For that case most project fails to operate and provide the designed output to the community because they lack proper integration between stakeholders (Cole, 2005; Deakin et al., 2002; Thomson et al., 2011; Ronoh et al., 2022).

Ololosokwan Ward in Ngorongoro district is one of the potential area with different development projects that require integration of different stakeholders including local communities (URT, 2013; Kairung et al., 2019). Different studies regarding the development projects have been conducted. For instance, Mbowe et al. (2021) found that there are community eco-tourism that is a joint venture between the

surrounding communities with the NGOs. While Ronoh et al.(2022) noted that there are persistent of conflicts between the communities surrounding the Wild Management Area (WMA) due to lack of clear structure on the benefits of the project.

Similary, Kairung et al. (2019) recommended that there is a need to develop a partnership between the government, NGOs and the local communities surrounding the projects in Ololosokwan ward. Despite the available literature pertaining the study area, little in known on the extent of local communities' participation in project development and its benefits for sustainability of projects. This research gap created a need to conduct the current study that focused on investigating the participation of communities in projects development in the study area and its benefits to project sustainability.

## **1.2 Research problem Statement**

Development project sustainability is a critical prerequisite for achieving lasting development impact. Despite significant investments in various development projects within Ngorongoro district, a substantial number of these projects are characterized by a number a non-functional sustainability status. This failure prevents the expected rise in the district's development level. A review of the literature reveals a gap in empirical evidence regarding the specific Impact of community participation on project sustainability specifically in the context of Ngorongoro district. While global studies exist, local mechanisms and constrains remain poorly understood. Therefore, this study aims to assess the impact of community participation on the sustainability of development projects in

Ngorongoro district in Arusha region in the northern part of Tanzania to provide evidence-based recommendations for enhancing long-term success.

### **1.3 Objectives of the study**

The main objective of this study was to assess the impact of community participation on the sustainability of development projects.

#### **1.3.1 Specific objectives**

- i. To determine the extent and nature of community participation across selected development projects in the study area.
- ii. To examine the relationship between the level of community participation and the sustainability status of the development projects.
- iii. To identify key factors that mediate the influence of community participation on project sustainability.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

- i. What is the extent and nature of community participation across selected development projects in the study area?
- ii. What is the relationship between the level of community participation and the sustainability status of the development projects?
- iii. What are the key factors that mediate the influence of community participation on project sustainability?

### **1.5 Limitations of the of the Study**

The study encountered several challenges, mostly women had little participation especially during the FGDs and semi-structured interviews due to cultural practise

that limited them to talk in front of men. Thus, the study used a suitable approach that ensued effective participation participation of both men and women including having separate discussions between men and women. Furthermore, most participants were not easily available at the household due to nature of the socio-economic activities of the Maasai communities who always move with cattle searching for pasture and water. Thus, researcher used to walk some distance towards areas where participants were enganging in their livelihoods.

### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

The study findings will add knowledge to policy makers on the significance of local communities participation for sustainability of development projects. Furthermore, the findings from the current study will add more knowledge on how differernt stakeholders should coordinate for the sustainability of the project in any development sector, stakeholders such as communities, central government, local government, NGOs as well as other agencies might use the current study findings to improve their integration regarding development projects for sustainable development.

Equally, the findings from the current study will go hand to hand with the Tanzania Development Vision 2025 which seeks to raise the living standard of Tanzanians to the level of middle-income country by 2025. Thus, local communities' participation on project development will add more communities' livelihoods hence, improving their wellbeing. The study findings will help the researcher to pin point areas for further research area and add a reference to the researchers on stakeholders' participation. Similarly, the study findings add knowledge to the researcher

practically in the field of community to participate in the development activities for sustainable development.

### **1.7 Scope of the Study**

The study focuses on the investigating the participation of local communities' participation on project development sustainability at Ololosokwani village. The study did not investigate every thing about local communities' participation. It focused on how local communities are part and parcel of the established projects. Other researchers can carry out researches to investigate the nature of the established projects whether communities established or other agencies established the projects in the study area.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Chapter overview**

This chapter reviews the literature on the participation of community members in development project sustainability. In this chapter, the researcher will elucidate definitions of key terms related to the study objectives. It also explains the study's theories. Moreover, the researcher will provide empirical literature/theories from the work of other scholars related to the study objectives.

#### **2.2 Conceptual Definition**

##### **2.2.1 Community**

The term community generally refers to a group of individuals who share a common location, interests, or identity. According to the Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, a community is "a body of persons having a shared history or common social, economic, and political interests" (Webster, 2004). For the purpose of this study, community refers specifically to the residents of Ololosokwan Village in Ngorongoro District, whose social and economic cohesion forms the basis for collective involvement in development projects.

##### **2.2.2 Community Participation**

Community participation involves the active engagement of local people in influencing and sharing control over decisions and resources that affect their lives. Oakley and Marsden (1984) define it as a process that empowers individuals to take ownership of their development through decision-making and collective action. In the context of this study, it includes community involvement in project planning,

resource mobilization, implementation, and monitoring essential components for achieving sustainable development outcomes (Mansuri & Rao, 2004; Schouten & Moriarty, 2003).

### **2.2.3 Sustainability**

Sustainability refers to the capacity of a project to continue delivering benefits over the long term without external support. Scoones (2007) emphasizes that sustainability in development entails maintaining institutional structures and outcomes even after donor withdrawal. Within this study, sustainability pertains to the ability of development projects in Ngorongoro to persist and remain beneficial due to continued community engagement and ownership.

### **2.2.4 Community Development**

Community development is a process that integrates local initiative with institutional support to improve the economic, social, and cultural well-being of communities. The United Nations (UN-DESA, 1977) defines it as the unification of community and governmental efforts to foster self-reliance and improve living standards. This study adopts this perspective to examine how development initiatives in Ololosokwan such as water, education, or eco-tourism projects are influenced by the extent of local community involvement.

## **2.3 Theoretical Literature Review**

Theoretical frameworks provide structured lenses through which complex social phenomena can be understood, explained, and interpreted. For this study on the impact of community participation on development project sustainability in

Ngorongoro District, three interrelated theories were adopted: Community Participation Theory, Community Empowerment Theory, and Systems Theory. Each theory brings distinct yet complementary insights that, when combined, offer a more holistic understanding of community dynamics in sustaining development interventions.

Community Participation Theory (Arnstein, 1969) serves as the foundation by emphasizing the redistribution of power through inclusive decision-making processes. It highlights that genuine participation occurs when communities influence project design, implementation, and monitoring. This theory underscores the need for engagement as a means of fostering ownership and accountability in development initiatives. However, participation alone is not sufficient unless communities are also empowered to act. Here, Community Empowerment Theory (Ledwith, 2005) becomes relevant by focusing on enhancing individual and collective capacities psychologically, economically, and socially. Empowerment facilitates active agency and a collective consciousness necessary for transformative development. It shows how communities can move from passive recipients to active stakeholders with the tools, knowledge, and confidence to sustain development outcomes.

Still, both participation and empowerment occur within a broader interactive environment involving multiple actors and structures. Systems Theory (Saleemi, 2008; Meles, 2010) bridges this gap by viewing development projects as dynamic systems composed of interconnected subsystems such as communities, government bodies, and NGOs that must function collaboratively for sustainability. This theory

draws attention to how the interdependence and feedback among stakeholders influence project outcomes.

Taken together, these three theories provide a comprehensive analytical framework for this study. Community Participation Theory identifies the importance of inclusive engagement, Empowerment Theory emphasizes capacity-building as a catalyst for sustainability, and Systems Theory contextualizes the interaction between all actors involved. Their integration ensures a multidimensional approach to understanding the mechanisms through which community participation contributes to the long-term sustainability of development projects in the Ngorongoro context.

## **2.4 Types of Participation**

Community participation can occur at varying levels of engagement, each reflecting different degrees of influence and control over decision-making processes. Understanding these types is essential for evaluating the depth and effectiveness of community involvement in development projects.

### **2.4.1 Passive Participation**

In passive participation, community members are merely informed about decisions made or actions taken, without being consulted or given a chance to contribute. Information flows one-way, typically from external agents or project implementers to the public, often through announcements, reports, or public meetings (Pretty, 1995). Such participation offers little opportunity for local ownership or feedback and is often inadequate for ensuring sustainable outcomes.

#### **2.4.2 Participation in Information Giving**

At this level, communities respond to inquiries such as surveys or interviews but still lack real influence over project decisions. While their views are collected, they are not engaged in shaping the problems or solutions. The process is extractive, often designed by external researchers or implementers to inform their own frameworks rather than those of the community (Pretty, 1995; Cornwall, 2008).

#### **2.4.3 Participation by Consultation**

This form entails consulting community members to gather their opinions and feedback. However, decision-making power remains with external agents who may or may not incorporate local inputs. While it shows a willingness to listen, this approach still reflects a top-down relationship in which communities play a limited role (Chambers, 1994).

#### **2.4.4 Functional Participation**

Functional participation occurs when community involvement is organized to meet pre-defined objectives, often after key project decisions have already been made. Although the community may participate in implementation or maintenance, the project remains largely externally driven. Over time, however, such participation can foster some degree of local capacity and autonomy (Pretty, 1995).

#### **2.4.5 Interactive Participation**

Interactive participation is characterized by joint analysis, planning, and action between communities and external stakeholders. This approach enables shared control and empowers communities to influence outcomes meaningfully. It supports

institution-building and long-term collaboration, often resulting in higher project sustainability (Cornwall & Gaventa, 2001).

#### **2.4.6 Self-Mobilization**

At the highest level, communities independently initiate and lead actions without external instigation. They organize to address their own development challenges, mobilizing internal and external resources when necessary. This form of participation reflects strong community capacity and ownership, potentially challenging existing power dynamics (Pimbert & Pretty, 1994).

### **2.5 Factors influencing participation**

#### **2.5.1 Centralization of decision making**

Cole (2004) explains that the conclusions range from those of a vibrant, once for all nature to those of a repetitive and moderately trivial nature. The management has critical areas, which are administrative, operative and strategic. Strategic decisions are long-term decisions which address issues such as inventory, pricing and output levels. The major decisions are based on the authority decision from the top management of the institutions. Koontz (1998) explains that decision-making is concentrated at the top of the institutional hierarchy. Therefore, decision-making is well-thought-out to be of critical rank when discussing different participation levels. Therefore, decision-making supremacies need to be transferred to societies. If the society members have little power over the decision made about the distribution of resources, they may lose focus and decline or not effectively participate in the activities planned (Paul, 1984).

### **2.5.2 Transparency**

Transparent is an effective way to encourage community participation. It can potentially change power relations between communities and development institutions and interests within societies (Shashi & Kerry, 2002). Merely transferring funds to committees is not adequate to introduce community control, as communities need to be protected from the abuses of committees hastily assembled to present them. This means that when the processes regarding participation are conducted with transparency, it brings about trust and increases the level of communities' participation in development projects.

### **2.5.3 Resources**

Resources are the organizations' assets and are thus the basic building blocks of the organization. The resources are the institution's assets and are thus the cornerstone of the institution to progress in achieving its planned goal. It includes financial and human resources such as funds, plants, location, working tools, employees and their skills, reputation and culture ( Hunger & Whelen, 2007).

### **2.5.4 Attitude**

According to Luthans (2005), attitude is the persistent propensity to feel and act in a certain way toward an object. Evaluative remarks about objects are called attitudes, and they can be positive or negative. Also included were attitude's behavioural, emotional, and informational components. The affective feelings a person has whether good, neutral, or adverse about an object are included in the emotional component. An individual's beliefs and knowledge of the object make up the informational component. It doesn't matter if this knowledge is true or false based on

empirical evidence. The tendency of a person to behave in a particular way toward an object makes up the third half of attitude, which is behavioral. The only one of the three aspects of attitude that can be directly observed is the behavioral aspect. It is considered that measuring someone's attitude is the only way to learn about their beliefs, emotions, and behavioral patterns towards an object. As a result, this aspect of the study focused on community involvement.

## **2.6 Importance of community Participation**

Since it is well acknowledged that community participation is one of the essential components of an empowered community, an extensive literature search has been done to identify the significance of community involvement in development initiatives. Participation in the community is not only required, but also a requirement for success. Studies show that communities with active resident and partner participation in community development raise more funds, provide more results, develop more holistically, and are ultimately more helpful. For a project to be sustainable and for a community to succeed, community involvement is crucial (Norman, 2000).

The importance of community participation is emphasized by Lancaster (2002) in the following ways: partnership or participation helps to protect the interests of the people involved, it improves people's self-respect and self-reliance, allowing them to obtain and complete this on their own, and communities become aware of the project implementation. They are aware of the demands in their community and the nature of the new project they will undertake. By imparting the new knowledge they have acquired to other civilizations, they can hasten the growth of the new

notion. Participation fosters a sense of community ownership, for instance, they will use their own resources, such as dispensary facilities, water pumps, and school buildings to safeguard and maintain the initiatives.

### **2.6.1 Evolution of Community Participation in Tanzania**

Tanzania's economy now heavily depends on community participation in the development process. In the 1960s and 1970s, Tanzania picked Ujamaa as a path to modern development initiatives, which was also the time when the ideology directing people's participation in Tanzania's development process endeavors first developed. Soon after Tanzania gained independence in 1961, efforts to encourage community involvement started. Tanzania's government uses community involvement at several points to advance the country's economy. The researcher outlines the many stages of development processes at which people are involved.

### **1<sup>st</sup> Phase of Arusha Declaration and Villagelization Program**

The Arusha Declaration in 1967 laid the foundation for Tanzania's history and community involvement. The proclamation set out the concept of social-economic liberation based on African Socialism and Self-reliance as a long-term national development objective (URT, 2004:1). In 1972, the government disbanded the colonial Local Government Authorities and implemented regional decentralization in an effort to give the people more power. Decentralization is transferring more power from the federal level to local governments, which are open to the public. The late Mwalimu Nyerere believed that decentralization would empower everyone to direct and take part in their own development.

Later, the administration realized that local residents were unaffected by regional devolution. The majority of people in rural areas continue to live in utter poverty. In Tanzania, the Local Government Authority was once more established by the government in 1982. Act No. 7-10 of 1982 established the local government to give the citizens more power. Local people and representatives of the local government work together to support growth in the area.

The new Local Government Authorities are generally expected to increase community involvement in the development processes. The United Republic of Tanzania's Constitution provides that local governments have the authority to grant individuals more power in Section 1 of Article 146. In order to create and carry out development projects in their local communities and generally across the country, local government authorities have the authority and obligation to encourage residents to participate (URT, 1998:130 ; URT, 2004:1).

Local residents and representatives of the local government collaborate to encourage growth in the area. The only purpose of the local government is to coerce people into taking part in development activities. People at that time did not voluntarily start the community involvement in this way. The Village Act of 1975 gave rise to the Tanzanian government's village development program, or "Villagelization Policy." The goal of this policy was to ensure that people lived in communities, collaborated on their shared development efforts, and treated everyone equally. The main objective of Mwl. Nyerere's Ujamaa and Self-reliance policy was villagelization, or Vijiji vya Ujamaa. Nyerere, Mwl. 1968:337). The Villagelization policy aims to create rural economic and social communities where people live together for the

good of all through community participation. The government supported people in establishing villages and streets and forming committees to enjoy their social-economic development like health centres, schools and roads for their communities. The communities contribute land, labour, and raw materials. At the same time, the government provides textbooks and teachers in schools (Mbillyi, 2000:1). Therefore, public involvement in primary school education development is a historical phenomenon in Tanzania.

### **The Second Phase of the era of Local Government Reforms Program (LGRP) in 1997**

The central government, or LGRP, transfers control, responsibility, and authority to the LGAs along the development process. The LGRP altered the relationships between the central government and local governments in four areas: political, financial, financial, and administrative decentralization. As part of the local government reform project, community members are required to participate in development processes. The reform sought to increase community participation in the reform process while promoting the values of democracy, openness, and accountability.

According to Ngware (2005:11), LGRP aids people in understanding their parts to play in advancing their own growth. Locals carried out most of the development work themselves, with help from the local government, such as building roads in remote regions, through the reforms. The local government also makes it easier for people to decide on issues that impact their lives and to plan and carry out development plans.

As a result, we must all be aware that community engagement in Tanzania is a historical occurrence in order to respond to the research's objectives. Marsland (2006:66) suggested that Mwl. Nyerere's early after-independence advocacy of African socialism and self-reliance (kujitegemea) is where Tanzania's discourse on local people participation originates. Tanzania's leadership made the Arusha Declaration in 1967, which made it clear that the country would adopt the Ujamaa Policy (Socialism) as its system of administration. The government's initial action was to nationalize all businesses and institutions owned by private entities or individuals, including schools. As part of the Ujamaa program, the government creates new villages (Villagelization policy), relocating people there to start new communities.

## **2.7 Empirical Literature Review**

### **2.7.1 Community development project**

Khwaja (2003) provides empirical support to highlight the community development projects in Northern Pakistan. The findings show that communities engaged in forest management that integrated local people, central government, NGOs as well as international donors. Katz and Sara (1997) examined the participation of communities in water management systems in different nations. Due to the democratic and inclusive nature of the process, the results demonstrate that in countries where societies actively participated in the formulation of the project's concept notes and implementation, which led to the remarkable performance in the water systems. In contrast, the projects that were formulated without the community concerned, supervision and most of the management not involving the implementors

tended to be purely designed by private consultants did not yield as intended.

In African context, studies by Musavengane et al. (2019) and those of Forje et al. (2022) show that Community in the SSS participated in resources management like forest management, water resources as well as in land restoration. Furthermore, the findings show that only communities that were aware on the benefits of their participation participated fully. Bah (2004) conducted a study on rural water delivery in Sierra Leone, the findings indicated that community were less active in planning and monitoring, but they were actively only on using the available water resources. Similary, Musavengane et al. (2019) found that in Uganda local communities participated on conservation of forest and wildlife by cooperating with the central government under the ministry responsible for national Park development.

In Tanzania communities paticpate in different projects, for instance, Mboge et al. (2021) found communities' participation in the ecosystem conservation in the project named the Duru- Haitemba and Mggori in Manyara region. The project had high-level collaboration between communities and forest authorities in the government institutions, the project is implemented within the favorable policy framework unique to Tanzania. Equally, Mkiramweni et al. (2017), noted that communities in Mara and Mwanza regions area are actively parcipants in resources management such as land, water and wildlife in collaboration with Tanzania National Parks (TANAPA). According to Ronoh et al (2022) most communities projects in Tanzania are organised by externals while the surrounding communities just are reciepents of the policies from outside. Although several literature indicate

communities development projects that communities in Tanzania are active participants, none of the literature has focused in Ngorongoro area. Thus, the present study investigated the community development projects found in Ngorongoro district.

### **2.7.2 The extent of Communities' Participation in development Projects**

Full participation of the community in planning, operation and maintenance (O&M) and evaluation of projects are essential segments for sustainability of any project schemes (Lockwood, 2004). Musa (2000) noted that communities' in Nigeria participate in decision making about what project should be carried out in their local areas as well on implementing, monitoring and evaluating the projects for sustainable development. In addition, Kleemier (2000) found that local communities in Malawi participated in constructing roads and safeguarding the necessary infrastructure. According to Mbowe et al. (2021) little has been taken into consideration about using local resources to develop different development projects in the SSA. Similarly, according to Ditlev and Ditlev (2022) there is a need to develop a joint venture between key stakeholders in all phases of development projects in Africa especially in the SSA.

In Tanzania, communities' participation in development projects take different ways; For instance, Madon et al. (2018) found that most local communities in Tanzania participate on development projects like road construction, water resources management, land restoration as well as constructing school and health facilities. But in most cases local communities are just participate in implementation phase. Similar findings were presented by Ronoh et al. (2022) who found the conflicts between

human and WMA in Tanzania that mostly were attributed by lack of coordination between the actors such as local communities and the government under the WMA in planning for wildlife and local communities' livelihood strategies.

Although local communities participate in project development in Tanzania, in most cases are just recipients of the plans from the top authorities (Mkiramweni et al., 2017). Several studies justify that communities in Tanzania participate in one way or another in development projects at different times depending on the environment and the resources available. Yet, little is known on the extent at which communities in Ngorongoro districts participate in development projects. This has added the need for the present study that investigated the extent of local communities participation in development projects in the study area.

### **2.7.3 Benefits of Communities' Participation on development Projects Sustainability**

In 2004, Muhammad Anwar Ul Haq investigated how community participation contributes to project sustainability. The findings show that 32% and 47%, of respondents respectively, asserted that communities' participation increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the project. Komalawati (2008) found that small farmer who participated in restoring the degraded land in the Latin America increased the land productivity. Furthermore, because famers owned the project decisions, they were willing funds the initiatives. According to (Musavengane et al. (2019) participation of communities will increase as sense of ownership over the project, hence improving its sustainability. Furthermore, the intended participants and those who would immediately profit from the project or programs, such as the

government and the implementing agency, are both stakeholders who need to collaborate with local communities in every aspect (Australian Agency for International Development, 2000:4). Because they are the ones who decide whether to keep using or quit using the services and benefits produced by the project, intended participants are of utmost importance.

Tanzania's current low level of community development and general lack of basic economic and social amenities, like roads, water, and health care, are justified by a significant central government involvement in the design and operation of local government (REPOA, 2010). The research issued a warning that the absence of central government intervention might lead to severe inequities across communities in the provision of basic services and the thin distribution of resources among multiple local projects that only offer little social and economic benefits. According to REPOA, if central government does not respond, community involvement in planning may lose its legitimacy. Madon et al. (2018); noted that although local communities are key actors in project development, but in most cases they are less concerned with planning and evaluation as a result most projects fail.

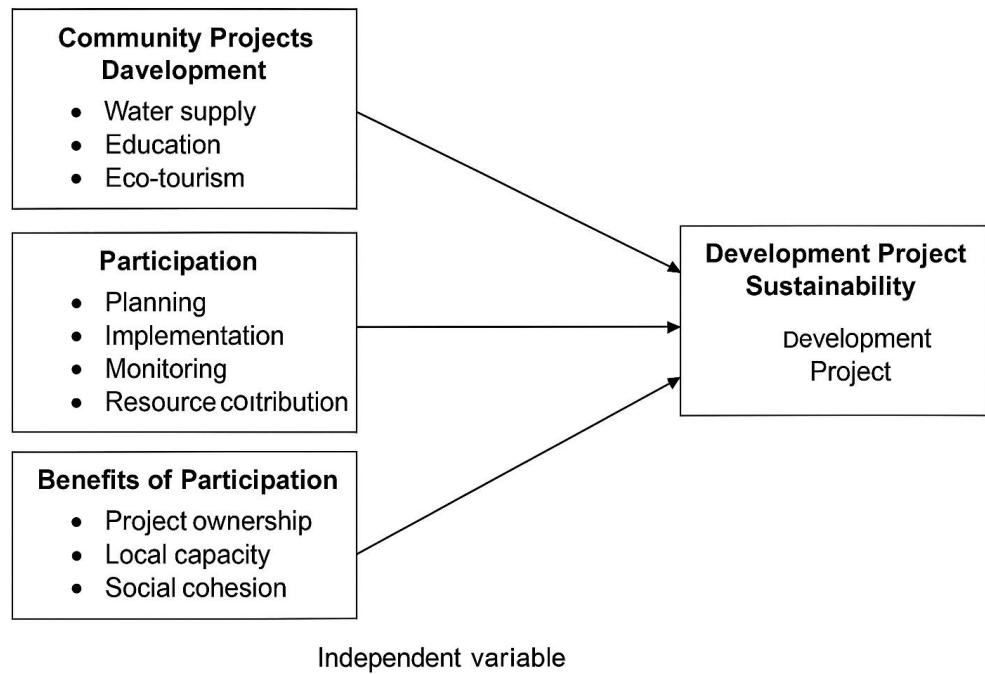
According to Ronoh et al. (2022) there are conflicts between stakeholders in different development projects caused by lack of clear structure about projects hence limiting the achievement of project sustainability. Most studies on the benefits of local communities' participation in development projects in Tanzania have not focused on Ngorongoro districts where there are number of established development projects. Therefore, the present study intended to investigate the benefits of communities' participation in development projects sustainability in the study area.

## 2.8 Research Gap

Studies on communities' participation on development projects reveal that across the global scale, communities participate in development projects. Their participation has added the sustainability of different projects. However, most studies reveal that in most cases local communities do not participate in some phases of project such as in planning, evaluation as well as monitoring. The situation that hinder the sustainability of most projects. Yet little is known on how local communities in Ngorongoro district participate in development projects sustainability. Thus, the present study investigated the extent of local communities' participation in development projects sustainability in the study area to fill the knowledge gap.

## 2.9 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study illustrates the relationship between community participation and the sustainability of development projects. It is anchored on three key independent variables derived from the study objectives: the nature of community development projects, the extent of community participation, and the benefits derived from participation. Each of these variables is linked to specific indicators such as the types of projects, participation activities, and benefits which were also measured through the study's data collection tools. These independent variables collectively influence the dependent variable, which is the sustainability of development projects. This framework reflects the theoretical grounding in community participation, empowerment, and systems thinking, emphasizing the interactive roles of local actors in ensuring long-term development outcomes.



**Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework of the Study**

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Chapter Overview**

This chapter outlines the methodology used to conduct the study, detailing the research design, population, and sampling procedures. It explains how the sample size was determined and describes the tools used to collect both qualitative and quantitative data, including questionnaires and interviews. The chapter also covers the methods of data analysis statistical analysis using SPSS and thematic analysis for qualitative data. Lastly, it highlights the measures taken to ensure the reliability, validity, and ethical integrity of the research process.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

The study adopted a descriptive research design. Creswell (2012) defined it as a procedure for collecting, analyzing, and mixing quantitative and qualitative research methods in a single study to understand a research problem. Furthermore Wiersma and Jurs (2005), depicted that research design explains the issues like participants for the research and preparing for data collection activities that comprise the research process. The researcher preferred descriptive research design because the variables under study have already occurred and are beyond control.

Also, this design gives this study the advantage of collecting original data to describe a population which is too large to observe directly; hence suitable for generalization (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000). A descriptive survey gathers data on a one-shot basis and is economical and efficient (Morrison, (1993). The descriptive survey is also compatible with the questionnaire schedule the research will employ in

collecting data (Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999). During data collection, a mixed research approach was used. A mixed research approach combines both qualitative and quantitative methods for data collection (Kothari, 2004).

### **3.3 Sampling Frame and Sampling Unit**

According to Treadwell, (2011), every individual or item of a type you want to study is the population of the study. Therefore, a population refers to all members, groups or elements the researcher hopes to gain information and represent the actual situation of the field in the study and from which he or she concludes. In social science research work population of a particular area gives a sampling frame as well as sampling unit (Creswell, 2012). Therefore the sampling frame for this study was all adult people (18 years and above) people of the Ololosokwani village. While the sampling units consisted all adult people who have lived in the study area at least for five years. This criterial was used because the study wanted to assess the participation of individuals in development projects at least for the last five years. Thus, the results of this study included all adult population lived in the study area for at least five years.

#### **3.3.1 Sample Size and determination of Sample Size**

A sample, according to Best and Kahn (2006), is a tiny section of a population that has been selected for observation and analysis. Based on the characteristics of the sample, the researcher can make inferences about the population from which it was drawn. According to them, there is no perfect sample size and any sample can be deemed sufficient based on the goals of the investigation. But a decent sample ought

to accurately represent the makeup of the population it is chosen from. Therefore, minimizing bias in the sample must be the overall goal of the sample selection procedure (Veal, 1997). The sample size is only a portion of the population. As a result, the sample must be adequate in size to support statistical analysis and be representative of the population given that it was chosen. According to Ngorongoro District Council there are approximately 800 household across all the district. (Ngorongoro District Development Report, 2018). Therefore the sample size from this population was determined using Yamane's (1967) equation and formula below:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where

$n$  = Sample size

$N$  = Population to be studied

$e$  = Desired precision (5 – 10%)

$$\text{Sample size (n)} = \text{Population size (N)} = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

Where The total number or population (N) = 800

$e$  = 5% (0.05)

$$800/1 + 800(0.05)^2$$

$$800/1 + 800(0.0025)$$

$$800/1 + 2$$

$$800/3$$

$$266.666667$$

Therefore:  $n=267$

The sample size for this study is 267 respondents from the households

### **3.3.2 Sampling Procedures**

According to Burns (2000), sampling is the process of picking a group or area to represent the entire study area. It entails selecting a subset of the population, observing a more focused group, then extrapolating the results to the entire population. Sampling is the process of selecting a sample from a population, according to Mason & Bramble (1997). Probability sampling and nonprobability sampling are two types of sample methodologies. Probability sampling is any method that makes use of some type of random selection and ensures that the various units in the population have equal chances of being chosen.

A random selection of sample units is not used in non-probability sampling. Simple random method, systematic sampling, stratified sampling, cluster sampling, and multistage sampling are all examples of probability samplings. Convenience sampling, purposeful sampling, snowball sampling, quota sampling, and purposeful sampling are all examples of non-probability sampling. The study used a random sampling procedure where each individual in the study area had equal chance to participate.

### **3.4 Data Collection Methods and Procedures**

Both primary and secondary data were collected for this study. According to Collis et al. (2009), primary data are facts gleaned directly from a source, like questionnaires, observations, and interviews. According to Burns (2000), primary data are first-hand accounts gathered for research. In order to gather more precise data, the secondary technique of data collecting also included documentary reviews. Primary data were collected through field work. The data were collected

using semi-structured interview, and in-depth interviews. The data were both quantitative and qualitative. Secondary data were collected from the related documents such as government reports and policies to supplement the primary data.

#### **3.4.1 Methods of Primary Data Collection**

##### **3.4.2 Questionnaire**

According to Kothari et al. (2012), a questionnaire is a group of questions created to achieve the goals of the study. In order to prevent biases and test the questionnaire's validity, a small sample of the target population was used. Some of the surveys were translated into Kiswahili, while others were written in English. To enable the researcher to get quantifiable data, the questionnaire was created in a close-ended manner. This included writing the answers on a five-point Likert scale, where "5" denoted strongly agree and "1" denoted strongly disagree. In contrast, the research can gather qualitative data thanks to the open-ended questions.

##### **3.4.3 In-depth interviews**

This method was used to collect qualitative data from the key informants. The method was chosen because it gives a chance to an investigator to explore individual's experiences, attitude, opinions and perceptions about the problem under investigation. The data gathered using this method included knowledge, opinions and experiences of the participants about how communities in the study area participate in development project sustainability.

#### **3.5 Sources of Secondary Data**

Secondary data were collected through different relevant documents related to the

study objectives. Most data were obtained from the wards' and villages' offices regarding to what development projects were available in the study area. Furthermore, documented related to the extent of local communities' participation and the benefits to sustainability of development projects. Secondary data supplemented the primary data collected.

### **3.6.Data Analysis and Presentation**

Both quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research objectives. Quantitative data collected through structured questionnaires were coded and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), where descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, and means were computed to summarize and interpret the data. These statistical outputs helped reveal patterns and trends related to community participation and project sustainability.

Meanwhile, qualitative data obtained from in-depth interviews and field notes were transcribed immediately after collection, then analyzed thematically by identifying recurring themes and sub-themes that reflected participants' experiences and perspectives. The qualitative findings enriched the quantitative results by providing contextual explanations and deeper insights. The analyzed data were presented through tables, charts, and figures for quantitative findings, while qualitative results were presented in narrative form supported by direct quotations to illustrate key viewpoints.

### **3.8 Reliability and Validity of the study**

Reliability refers to the consistency, stability, or dependability of the data. Whenever

an investigator measures a variable, he or she wants to be sure that the measurement provides dependable and consistent results (Cooper & Schindler 2003). A reliable measurement is one that if repeated a second time gives the same results as it did the first time. If the results are different, then the measurement is unreliable (Mugenda & Mugenda 2008). From the questionnaire design to the findings interpretation, numerous measures will be used in this study to guarantee that the results are free from material errors. Pre-testing the developed questionnaire and having the supervisor evaluate it beforehand are examples of such measures. Some Ololosokwani village residents will evaluate the questionnaire. By taking these steps, the researcher will be able to learn how long it takes to complete a questionnaire, whether the instructions and questions are clear, whether any topics are left out, how the questionnaire is laid out, and other information.

Validity refers to the extent to which an instrument measures what is supposed to measure. Data need not only to be reliable but also true and accurate. If a measurement is valid, it is also reliable (Joppe 2000). The content validity of the data collection instrument will be determined by discussing the research instrument. Validity is concerned with the people, environments, and periods to which findings can be applied. During the planning phase of this research, this will be covered. To assess the theoretical significance of the concepts and the consistency of language used to express concepts, the questionnaire will be sorted and pre-tested. The purpose of the pilot study is to evaluate the questionnaire's validity and dependability. This will be done to evaluate the validity and dependability of the data gathering tools (Several, 2003).

A pilot study, according to Dempsey (2003), is the process of testing data collection tools in advance to get rid of data collection issues that could result in poor data validity and dependability. The purpose of the pilot project is to assist identify flaws in the data collection tools and make the required corrections to ensure that accurate and trustworthy data was gathered. Additionally, you can gauge the questions' intentions by asking respondents if they understand the questions. The study objectives were compared to the content of the respondents' responses. The validity of the research instruments is demonstrated by evidence of content relevance, representativeness, and relevance to the study variables (Joppe 2000).

### **3.9 Ethical Consideration**

In the context of this study titled “Impact of Community Participation on Development Project Sustainability: A Case Study of Ngorongoro District, Arusha”, ethical considerations were carefully observed to ensure the protection, dignity, and rights of all research participants. Ethical research involves adherence to core principles such as voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, avoidance of harm, and transparent communication of results, which collectively enhance research validity and uphold scientific integrity (Mizra, Hadjer, & Bellalem, 2023).

In line with these principles, the researcher obtained an official data collection authorization letter from the Open University of Tanzania and submitted it to relevant local authorities in Ngorongoro District, including village leaders and ward offices. Prior to data collection, participants were provided with detailed information about the study's objectives, their rights as respondents, and the voluntary nature of

their participation. Informed consent was obtained through signed forms, and participants were assured that their identities would remain anonymous, with no names or identifying details recorded on the questionnaires or interview transcripts. The researcher emphasized that participants had the freedom to withdraw from the study at any stage without any negative consequences. Verbal briefings were conducted to further explain the purpose of the research and address any concerns before distributing the data collection tools. These steps ensured that ethical standards were maintained throughout the research process..

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

#### **4.1 Chapter Overview**

This chapter presents analysis, interpretation and discussions to examine the participation of local communities' participation in development projects sustainability.

#### **4.2 Demographic Information of the Respondents**

##### **4.2.1 Age of Respondents**

The findings indicate that the majority of respondents were young adults aged between 18 and 30 years (49%), followed by those aged 31 to 40 years (29%), and a smaller group aged 41 to 50 years (22%). Notably, no participants were above the age of 60. This age distribution suggests that the responses largely reflect the views of the economically active and physically engaged segment of the community.

Younger individuals are often more adaptable, technologically open, and inclined to participate in externally driven initiatives such as development projects (Hassan, Ong'ayo, & Osore, 2019). However, the absence of elderly participants may limit insights into long-term community values and historical experiences that can influence sustainable development.

##### **4.2.2 Gender of Respondents**

Gender distribution among participants was fairly balanced, with males comprising 55% and females 45%. While this shows reasonable gender inclusivity, it also reflects the patriarchal nature of the Maasai community, where men often take the lead in representing households in community forums and decision-making processes. According to Hassan et al. (2019), gender is a significant factor

influencing participation in community development, as women often face barriers such as limited access to information, time constraints due to domestic roles, and cultural restrictions. Promoting gender-equitable participation is essential to ensure inclusive and representative project outcomes.

#### **4.2.3 Marital Status**

Most respondents (55%) were married, followed by single individuals (43%), and only a small proportion were divorced (2%). The predominance of married individuals is significant, as marital status often correlates with stronger ties to the community, higher social responsibility, and a greater interest in the outcomes of local projects. Married individuals may also have greater influence in household and community decisions, which may translate into higher involvement in participatory activities (Muganda, 2014). Their perspectives likely reflect the interests of family units rather than individuals alone.

#### **4.2.4 Educational Attainment**

The educational background of respondents varied, with 29% holding certificates, 25% secondary education, 17% primary education, 17% bachelor's degrees, 10% diplomas, and only 2% holding a master's degree. No respondent had attained a doctoral qualification. This distribution indicates a generally moderate level of formal education, with a substantial portion of the sample having at least secondary-level or vocational qualifications. Education is a critical enabler of participation, as it enhances individuals' ability to understand project objectives, engage in planning and monitoring activities, and make informed contributions. As noted by Haule (2017), educated community members are more likely to engage meaningfully in

development processes and advocate for transparency, accountability, and sustainability.

**Table 4.1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents'**

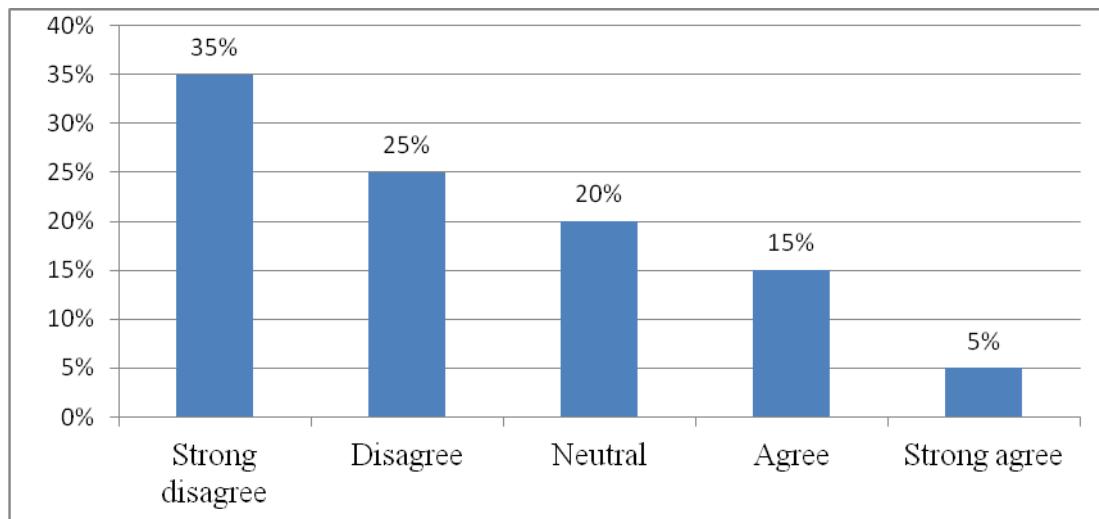
<b>Demographic Category</b>	<b>Category Value</b>	<b>Frequency(n)</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Age</b>	18-30 years	37	30.8
	31-40 years	60	50.0
	41-50 years	13	10.8
	51-60yrs	8	6.7
	60 +	2	1.7
<b>Gender</b>	Male	71	59.2
	Female	49	40.8
<b>Marital Status</b>	Single	33	27.5
	Married	72	60.0
	Divorced	6	5.0
	Widow	9	7.5
<b>Education Level</b>	Primary level	10	8.3
	Secondary level		
	Certificate		
	Diploma	38	31.7
	Degree	62	51.7
	Master's degree	9	7.5
	PhD	1	0.80

**Source:** Survey Data (2018)

### **4.3 Community Participation on Developemnt Project**

Respondents were asked if they community partrcipated in development projects in the study area. The participants' responses were measured and categorized using a five-scale Likert type. Strongly disagree (1), Disagree (2), Neutral (3), Agree (4), and strongly agree (5) were the values on the scale. Figure 4.1 present the summary of the findings; The findings from the above figure reveal that the majority (60%) of respondents asserted that local communities in the study area do not participate in development projects, while only a small proportion (20%) acknowledged community involvement. This limited participation suggests that many of these

projects may lack sustainability, as community ownership and engagement are critical for long-term success.



**Figure 4.1: Respondents' Responses towards Local Communities' Participation**

**Source:** Survey Data (2018).

This observation is supported by Osman (2018), who found in a study conducted in Kenya that low levels of community participation significantly undermined the sustainability of development initiatives. The study emphasized that meaningful involvement in planning, implementation, and decision-making processes leads to stronger local commitment and improved project outcomes. Therefore, enhancing community participation is essential to ensure that development projects are sustainable and continue to deliver benefits beyond the period of external support.

#### **4. 4 The extent of Communities' Participation In Development Projects**

The study investigated the extent at which the communities in Ngorongoro district participated in development projects. The findings are presented in Table 4.2.

**Table 4.2: The extent to which the Communities Participated in Development Project Sustainability**

Statement	1 (SD)	2 (D)	3 (N)	4 (A)	5 (SA)
The community is involved in the design of programs	71 (26.6%)	58 (21.7%)	27 (10.1%)	71 (26.6%)	40 (15.0%)
The community is involved in project monitoring	79 (29.6%)	46 (17.2%)	35 (13.1%)	77 (28.8%)	30 (11.2%)
The community is involved in the provision of human resources	93 (34.7%)	16 (6.0%)	44 (16.4%)	83 (31.0%)	31 (11.6%)
The community contributes to project financing	70 (26.1%)	37 (13.8%)	24 (9.0%)	65 (24.3%)	71 (26.5%)
The community is involved in ensuring security of project infrastructure	33 (12.3%)	28 (10.4%)	36 (13.4%)	102 (38.4%)	67 (25.0%)
The community participates as project implementers	73 (27.2%)	26 (9.7%)	32 (11.9%)	81 (30.2%)	55 (20.5%)

**Source:** Survey Data (2018)

As shown in Table 4.2 above, community participation in key stages of development project implementation appears to be relatively limited in several areas. More than half of the respondents (48.3%) disagreed or strongly disagreed (26.6% strongly disagreed and 21.7% disagreed) that the community is involved in the design of development programs. Only 41.6% agreed, and 10.1% remained neutral. This suggests that project planning is often top-down, with minimal input from the beneficiaries, which may weaken the sense of ownership and long-term sustainability of the projects.

Similarly, regarding participation in monitoring activities, 46.8% of respondents disagreed, while only 40% agreed. The remaining 13.1% were neutral. This indicates

that community involvement in project oversight is lacking, potentially limiting transparency and responsiveness during implementation. Low participation in monitoring can hinder timely adjustments and reduce accountability among implementing stakeholders.

In terms of providing human resources, 40.7% of respondents disagreed that communities contribute significantly in this regard, while 42.6% agreed and 16.4% remained neutral. These findings suggest a moderate level of involvement, but the substantial disagreement still points to challenges in mobilizing local capacity, which may impact project execution and sustainability. Community contributions to project financing received relatively stronger agreement, with over half of the respondents (50.8%) agreeing that communities play a role in funding. However, 39.9% still disagreed, and 9% were neutral. This indicates some willingness among communities to invest in projects, but not consistently across all areas, possibly due to economic constraints or lack of engagement during financial planning.

The highest level of agreement was observed in relation to community involvement in ensuring project security. Over half (51.8%) of respondents agreed, while only 22.7% disagreed. This implies that communities are actively engaged in safeguarding project assets, which is a crucial element for sustaining physical infrastructure and ensuring long-term use. Lastly, community participation as project implementers was also relatively strong, with 50.7% agreeing and 36.9% disagreeing. The remaining 11.9% were neutral. This reflects a fairly active role among community members during implementation phases, though still not universally observed. Overall, these findings indicate uneven participation across

different stages of the project cycle, highlighting the need for more inclusive strategies, particularly in project planning and monitoring, to enhance ownership and sustainability.

#### **4.5 Benefits of Communities' Participation in development Project Sustainability**

The respondents shared their thoughts on the variables taken into account when judging a development project's sustainability. The Likert scale was used to assess the responders' answers. Strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neutral (3), agree (4), and strongly agree (5) are the alternatives on the scale. Table 4.3 displays the frequency distribution of the responses from the 267 respondents who were the subject of the inquiry.

**Table 4.3 Benefits of Community Participation on development Project Sustainability**

Statement	1 (SD)	2 (D)	3 (N)	4 (A)	5 (SA)
Ensure attainment of project sustainability	17 (6.4%)	3 (1.1%)	37 (13.9%)	111 (41.6%)	99 (37.1%)
Ensure completion of the project on time	12 (4.5%)	18 (6.7%)	25 (9.4%)	111 (41.6%)	101 (37.8%)
Ensure the efficiency of the project	12 (4.5%)	7 (2.6%)	34 (12.7%)	110 (41.2%)	100 (37.5%)
Ensure satisfaction of client in all aspects expected	7 (2.6%)	8 (3.0%)	31 (11.6%)	100 (37.5%)	121 (45.3%)
Create sense of project ownership by community	12 (4.5%)	9 (3.4%)	30 (11.2%)	140 (52.4%)	76 (28.5%)
Ensures project awareness among the community members	8 (3.0%)	5 (1.9%)	23 (8.6%)	121 (45.3%)	76 (28.5%)

**Source:** Survey Data (2018)

As shown in Table 4.3, the findings reveal that community participation has significant perceived benefits for the sustainability of development projects. A large

majority of respondents (78.7 %) agreed or strongly agreed that community involvement ensures project sustainability, while only 7.7 % disagreed and 13.9 % remained neutral. This suggests that local participation is widely viewed as a critical factor in maintaining project outcomes over time. Previous research supports this view: for example, Osman (2018) found a strong positive relationship between community participation and the sustainability of development projects in Kenya.

Similarly, 79.4 % of respondents agreed that community engagement contributes to the timely completion of projects, indicating that when local stakeholders are involved, implementation may proceed more efficiently. This echoes findings by Akumu (2017), who argued that beneficiary involvement enhances project effectiveness, efficiency, and timeliness in Kenya. Regarding project efficiency, 78.7 % also supported the idea that community participation enhances overall project performance. This strong consensus underscores the value of tapping into local knowledge, labour, and commitment. The literature likewise emphasises that community participation is linked to improved performance and cost-effectiveness of development interventions (Loparimoi, 2023).

Satisfaction of the beneficiaries was also highly rated, with 82.8 % of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that involving communities leads to better alignment with their expectations and needs. The low level of disagreement (5.6 %) on this item further reinforces this positive view. This finding resonates with Mahuwi (2020), whose work with NGOs in Tanzania found that meaningful community participation is closely tied to service alignment with user needs and improves beneficiary satisfaction.

In terms of project ownership, 80.9 % of respondents felt that participation builds a sense of responsibility among community members, which is vital for maintaining infrastructure and services once external support ends. Additionally, 73.8 % indicated that community involvement enhances awareness about project goals and activities. While this is slightly lower than other items, it still shows substantial support for the idea that engagement contributes to information flow and transparency. This is consistent with Mahuwi's (2020) argument that community participation promotes accountability and empowerment, which in turn fosters sustainable ownership. Overall, the findings suggest that community participation is strongly linked to multiple aspects of project success including sustainability, efficiency, timeliness, and ownership highlighting the need for development initiatives to integrate community members throughout all stages of the project cycle.

#### **4.6 Impact of Community Empowerment on Development Project Sustainability**

Examining how community empowerment affects the sustainability of development projects was one of the tasks given to the participants. The probable criteria to determine whether community empowerment affects the sustainability of development projects were predetermined at six (6) things. The participant responses were measured and categorized using the Likert scale. Strongly disagree (1), Disagree (2), Neutral (3), Agree (4), and strongly agree (5) were the values on the scale. The frequency distribution of the replies from the 276 people who were the subject of the investigation is shown in Table 4.4. The DISAGREE column

combines the Disagree and Strongly Disagree options. Likewise, the AGREE column was created by combining the words agree and strongly agree.

**Table 4.4: Impact of Community Empowerment on Development Project Sustainability**

Statement	1 (SD)	2 (D)	3 (N)	4 (A)	5 (SA)
Simplify the decision-making process	19 (7.1%)	16 (6.0%)	35 (13.1%)	37 (13.9%)	123 (46.1%)
Increase community participation	6 (2.2%)	3 (1.1%)	20 (7.5%)	163 (61.0%)	75 (28.1%)
The community can agree on the proposed location of the various projects	26 (9.6%)	6 (2.2%)	27 (10.1%)	100 (37.5%)	108 (41.2%)
The community can come up with a project monitoring and evaluation plan	13 (4.9%)	8 (3.0%)	21 (7.9%)	132 (49.4%)	93 (34.8%)
The community will have the technical and management capacity to operate and maintain the project	9 (3.4%)	1 (0.4%)	60 (22.5%)	116 (43.4%)	81 (30.3%)
The community participated will come up with the implementation plan	26 (9.7%)	6 (2.2%)	42 (15.7%)	114 (42.7%)	79 (29.6%)

**Source:** Survey Data (2018).

As shown in Table 4.4, the findings suggest that community participation significantly enhances various aspects of project planning and implementation. A substantial proportion of respondents (60%) agreed or strongly agreed that community involvement simplifies the decision-making process, although 13.1% remained neutral and 13.1% expressed disagreement. This implies that participation helps streamline choices and foster consensus within the project cycle. Prior studies support this perspective; for example, Chirenje, Giliba, and Musamba (2013) observed that community participation fosters local ownership, improving both decision-making and project performance. Even more pronounced was the

agreement regarding increased community participation itself, with 89.1% supporting the statement and only a small fraction (3.3%) disagreeing. This overwhelming response reflects a strong perception that participatory approaches encourage broader engagement from local stakeholders. Osman (2018) similarly concluded that community involvement across all project stages leads to improved sustainability and local accountability.

When asked whether the community can agree on the proposed location of projects, 78.7% affirmed this view, while 11.8% disagreed and 10.1% were neutral. This suggests a high level of cooperation in site selection, which can reduce future conflicts and resistance. Cornwall (2008) emphasized that inclusive planning processes strengthen legitimacy and local ownership of development initiatives. Similarly, 84.2% of respondents believed that communities are capable of contributing to project monitoring and evaluation planning, indicating a recognition of local capacity in maintaining accountability structures. Maige (2023) found that community involvement in monitoring and evaluation significantly correlates with long-term project sustainability in Tanzanian contexts.

Regarding technical and management capacities, 73.7% of participants agreed that communities could operate and maintain project outcomes, though a notable minority (22.5%) remained neutral. This reflects confidence in local ownership and skill development but also highlights the need for continuous capacity building. According to Syamsiyah et al. (2025), community-based project success is largely dependent on existing technical capacities and the strength of local leadership. Finally, 72.3% agreed that communities can generate implementation plans, showing

a strong belief in their potential to lead operational activities. However, the presence of 15.7% neutral and 11.9% disagreement responses signals that not all stakeholders are convinced of this capacity. Overall, these findings underscore the importance of active community participation in decision-making, planning, and execution processes, which are viewed as crucial for improving ownership, efficiency, and sustainability of development projects (Abdullahi, 2014).

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Chapter Overview**

This chapter presents the key conclusions drawn from the study findings, offers practical recommendations, and suggests areas for future research. The primary aim of the study was to examine the impact of community participation on the sustainability of development projects, using Ololosokwani Village in Ngorongoro District as a case study. The chapter synthesizes the findings in alignment with the study's specific objectives, focusing on the extent and nature of community participation, the perceived benefits of participation, and the contribution of such engagement to the sustainability of development initiatives. Based on the evidence collected and analyzed, the chapter outlines actionable insights and proposes strategies for strengthening community participation in future development efforts.

#### **5.2 Summary of Findings**

The study explored the participation of local communities in development project sustainability in Ngorongoro district. The study involved 267 participants with three specific objectives. First was to determine the extent and nature of community participation across selected development projects in the study area. Second, was to examine the relationship between the level of community participation and the sustainability status of the development projects. Third, was to identify key factors that mediate the influence of community participation on project sustainability.

The study findings on objective one, revealed that majority of respondents agreed that they participated on development projects. However, participation was limited

to implementation rather planning phase of the project circle. The conclusion we can draw from this finding is that, community lacks input into the critical foundational decisions of the project such as defining the problem, setting objectives and determining resource allocation. Equally, lack of participation in the planning stage may suggest that projects are designed externally and communities may feel lack of ownership of the project and thus compromising participation and sustainability.

Findings on objective two, showed a strong correlation between community participation and positive sustainability outcomes. The conclusion we can draw here is, Communities' participation increased projects' sustainability as their participation ensured the completion of project on the scheduled time, communities' participation assured the project's effectiveness, the client's satisfaction in all areas anticipated. Through communities' participation the sense of the community's project ownership was increased, and the community's awareness of the project also was increased. Last but not least, through communities' participation there was cost effective in accomplishing different development project.

Findings on the specific objective three showed that, lack of technical skills and financial capacity are constraining factors to communities' participation in development projects. However, active monitoring was found to be an enabling that mediates the influence of community participation on development project sustainability. The conclusion we can draw from this finding is that, community participation alone is not enough guarantee to project sustainability, it requires the inclusion of active monitoring to achieve project sustainability. Without active monitoring, participation may remain superficial ( participation for the sake of

participation) thus resulting to lower project sustainability. Communities must be involved in the monitoring (participatory monitoring) to boost the sense project ownership.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

The study findings revealed that communities in the study area participated in development projects. Their participation contributed highly to projects' sustainability. Yet, study findings show that local communities were less actively in projects planning and monitoring, the situation that limited the effectiveness of the sustainability of different projects. Thus, the study recommends the following

##### **5.4.1 The use of Structured Participatory Project Planning**

The study recommends that development projects use participatory planning tools that ensure local communities are the primary drivers of project identification, design and resource allocation. This involves shifting authority to local project communities, ensuring that the final project directly aligns with local needs and priorities which are essential for its long term viability.

##### **5.4.2 Formalize and Standardize Community Participation as a Mandatory Component of the Project Cycle**

The study recommends that policy must require that government and implementing agencies must formalize and standardize community participation as a mandatory component of the entire project cycle, allocating specific budget lines and institutional capacity to sustain this practice. Policy must require that a defined percentage of the total project budget be explicitly earmarked and spent on

facilitating genuine community participation such as training, communication, local meetings, and local management structures). This ensures that participation is treated as a necessary investment, not an afterthought.

#### **5.4.3 Implement Long-Term Capacity Building**

The study recommends that implementing organization must prioritize long-term capacity building to the local communities. This involves creating a sustainability plan that includes: Financially, establishing community owned maintainance funds. Technically, training a sufficient number of community members to conduct monitoring and repair project infrastructure independently. Implementing organization should establish a transparent localized Monitoring and accountability framework which will train and empower community members to use simple, local language metrics to track project performance. Making implementers accountable to the community for agreed locally sustainability indicators will strengthen ownership and minimize issues like fund misuse.

#### **5.4.4 Suggestions for Further Studies**

Although the study investigated the participation of communities' in development projects sustainability. It has not investigated everthing regarding communities participation in develoement projects. Further studies may be conducted and asses why in most cases communities in the study area were not active actors in planning and monitoring phases.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Respondents,

This is a research conducted to examine the impact of community involvement and participation in development projects sustainability. Please take your time in answering as accurately as possible. The following questionnaires will not reveal any names or identity regarding the Participants so answer honestly in order to minimize errors and bias. Your time in filling this questionnaire is highly appreciated.

**Instructions:**

- Please provide the appropriate answer in the space provided by marking with a tick (✓).
- Where possible give your opinions or comments in the space provided.
- Indicate the appropriate scale between 1 and 5 where 1 represents Strongly Disagree (SD), 2 represents Disagree (D), 3 represents Neutral (N), 4 represents Agree (A) and 5 represents Strongly Agree (SA) against all items used to measure community involvement and participation in development projects sustainability.

**Part One: Personal information**

1. Name of the Respondent (optional) -----

2. Your age

a. 18-30 years ( )

b. 31-40 years ( )

c. 41-50 years ( )

d. 51-60 years ( )

e. 60 + ( )

3. Gender

a. Male ( )

b. Female ( )

4. Marital Status

a. Single ( )

b. Married ( )

c. Divorced ( )

d. Widow/ Widower ( )

5. Academic qualifications

a. Primary level ( )

b. Secondary Level ( )

c. Certificate ( )

d. Diploma ( )

e. Degree ( )

f. Master's degree ( )

g. PhD ( )

6. How long have you been working and living in this community?

a. Less than 1 year ( )

b. 1-2 years ( )

c. 3-4 years ( )

d. 5-6 years ( )

e. Above 6 ( )

## **PART TWO: OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

### **1. To determine the extent of community participation in development projects.**

Please tick where appropriate on the following questions or by filling the right number on the box provided. (1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Neutral, 4-Agree, 5-Strongly Agree) whereby, (SD-Strongly Disagree, D-Disagree, N-Neutral, A-Agree, SA-Strongly Agree

Items	SD	D	N	A	SA
Community is involved in Design of programs					
Community is involved in Monitoring					
Community is involved in Provision of Human Resources					
Community is involved in Part Financing					
Community is involved in Security					
Community is involved as Project Implementers					

### **2. To examine the relationship between the level of community participation and sustainability status of the development project.**

Please tick where appropriate on the following questions or by filling the right number on the box provided. (1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Neutral, 4-Agree, 5-Strongly Agree) whereby, (SD-Strongly Disagree, D-Disagree, N-Neutral, A-Agree, SA-Strongly Agree

Items	SD	D	N	A	SA
Community members were actively involved in all major decisions concerning the project, from start to finish					
The community's suggestions and feedback significantly influenced the final design and implementation of the project.					
The project facilities are currently fully functional and operating as intended.					
The community is still receiving the intended benefits from the project today.					
The high level community involvement in this project is the primary reason why it has remained successful and operational to date.					
The community has the necessary resources and commitment to maintain the project effectively for the next five years.					

**3. To identify key factors that mediate the influence of community participation on project sustainability.**

Please tick where appropriate on the following questions or by filling the right number on the box provided. (1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Neutral, 4-Agree, 5-Strongly Agree) whereby, (SD-Strongly Disagree, D-Disagree, N-Neutral, A-Agree, SA-Strongly Agree

Items	SD	D	N	A	SA
Our community members received adequate technical training to manage and repair the project infrastructure independently after the external support ended.					
The community established a clear and functional local fund specifically for the maintenance and repair of the project.					
The appointed local project committee or leadership is transparent and holds regular meetings to communicate the project's status and finances to all community members.					
The local government authorities actively supported the community efforts to monitor and enforce rules related to project use and maintenance.					
Conflicts or lack of cohesion within the community frequently hampered decisions necessary for the long-term management of the project.					
The project was fully appropriate for our community's needs and capacity, making us more motivated to ensure its long-term survival.					

Thank you for your valuable time in filling out this questionnaire. Your cooperation is much appreciated as the success of this research depends on your support.

## APPENDIX 2: CLEARANCE LETTERS

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Ref. No OUT/PG201702097

14<sup>th</sup> February, 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

**RE: RESEARCH CLEARANCE FOR MR. CRISPO JEROME NDEMBEKA, REG.  
NO: PG201702097**

2. The Open University of Tanzania was established by an Act of Parliament No. 17 of 1992, which became operational on the 1<sup>st</sup> March 1993 by public notice No.55 in the official Gazette. The Act was however replaced by the Open University of Tanzania Charter of 2005, which became operational on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2007. In line with the Charter, the Open University of Tanzania mission is to generate and apply knowledge through research.

3. To facilitate and to simplify research process therefore, the act empowers the Vice Chancellor of the Open University of Tanzania to issue research clearance, on behalf of the Government of Tanzania and Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology, to both its staff and students who are doing research in Tanzania. With this brief background, the purpose of this letter is to introduce to you Mr. Crispo J. Ndembeka, Reg.No: PG201701373), pursuing Master of Arts in Monitoring and Evaluation (M.A M&E). We hereby grant this clearance to conduct a research titled "Impact of Community Participation on Development Project Sustainability: A case of Ngorongoro District, Arusha" He will collect data from 17<sup>th</sup> February 2025 to 30<sup>th</sup> March 2025.

4. In case you need any further information, kindly do not hesitate to contact the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) of the Open University of Tanzania, P.O.Box 23409,

Dar es Salaam. Tel: 022-2-2668820. We lastly thank you in advance for your assumed cooperation and facilitation of this research academic activity.

Yours sincerely,

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF TANZANIA**



Prof. Gwahula Raphael Kimamala

For: **VICE CHANCELLOR**