



**PROJECT PLANNING, STAKEHOLDERS ENGAGEMENT AND PROJECT
SUSTAINABILITY OF COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS' PROJECTS A
CASE OF GULU CITY NORTHERN UGANDA**

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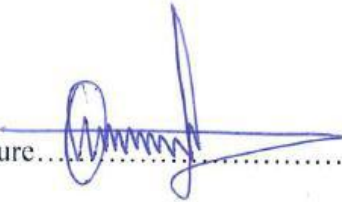
**A RESEARCH DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO MAKERERE UNIVERSITY
(FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH) IN PARTIAL
FULFILLMENT OF A MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
OF MAKERERE UNIVERSITY**

PLAN A

OCTOBER, 2024

DECLARATION

I, ODOKONYERO WALTER, certify that this research dissertation is wholly original with no submissions to universities or other higher education institutions for award consideration.

Signature.......... Date.....18/10/2024.....

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APPROVAL

This certifies that, in my capacity as the university supervisor, I have given my approval for the study project to be submitted for evaluation.

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Supervisor

DEDICATIONS

I dedicate this work to my beloved family, whose unwavering support and encouragement have guided me throughout this academic journey. I owe my deepest gratitude to my parents, who instilled in me the values of hard work and perseverance. Your sacrifices have paved the way for my achievements, and this study is a testament to your love and belief in me. I also dedicate this work to my friends and colleagues particularly those in the MBA program, for their collaborative spirits, resilience, and encouragement amidst challenges during the process that motivated me to undertake this research.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to acknowledge the following people who have been my pillars of strength throughout this journey.

To my academic supervisors and mentors, **Dr. Abdul Male Ssentumbwe** and **Mr. Bwino Keefa**, your guidance, invaluable insights, and constructive feedback have helped shape this dissertation. I would like to express my deepest gratitude for your tireless efforts in reviewing my work and steering me in the right direction. Your commitment to excellence inspired me to push my boundaries.

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the academic staff of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research at Makerere University Business School for their invaluable support throughout my academic journey.

To the community-based organizations within Gulu City who graciously participated in this research, thank you for sharing your experiences and insights. Your stories have enriched this work and made it possible to explore the realities of project planning, stakeholder engagement, and sustainability.

ABSTRACT

The research addresses how project planning and stakeholder involvement influences project sustainability. Cross-sectional research designed was used to investigate the influence of project planning, stakeholder engagement, and project sustainability of community-based projects in Gulu City, Northern Uganda. The study focused on a sample of 127 community based organizations' projects selected from the 200 registered community-based organizations, A total of 381 respondents were considered during the study, Data analysis was done using SPSS version 25.0, utilizing both descriptive and inferential statistics was used to test the hypotheses.

The findings revealed that effective project planning contributes 52.6% towards project sustainability and stakeholder engagement contribute 45.1% towards project sustainability are critical for achieving sustainable project outcomes. Statistical analysis showed a positive and significant relationship between project planning and project sustainability, stakeholder engagement has positive and significant relationship with project sustainability. The Combination of these factors explained only 37.0% of the variance in project sustainability meaning other factors contribute 63% on project sustainability. The study concludes that integrating sustainability into project planning and fostering stakeholder engagement enhances long-term success of project sustainability. Recommendations include prioritizing inclusive stakeholder engagement, improving communication, and incorporating sustainability frameworks from the project onset. Future research should explore the influence of culture in influencing of community-based projects for their sustainability. Limitations of the study, such as sample size and potential biases in self-reported data, are acknowledged, with suggestions for larger, more varied samples in future research.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

The sustainability of community-based projects has become a focal point in development discourse, especially in regions like Northern Uganda. Effective project planning and stakeholder engagement are pivotal in ensuring that these initiatives yield long-term benefits for the communities they serve. In recent years, the emphasis on participatory approaches has intensified. The World Bank (2019) advocates for community involvement in project design and implementation, asserting that such engagement fosters ownership and enhances sustainability. This participatory paradigm is particularly relevant in community-based projects, where stakeholder engagement is crucial for enduring success.

A study by Maina (2013) highlights that well-managed stakeholder engagement not only improves human well-being but also mitigates negative environmental impacts and bolsters economic sustainability. Governments and international organizations are thus encouraged to employ diverse stakeholder engagement techniques to ensure project success. Rolstadås et al. (2014) emphasize that integrating social, economic, and environmental dimensions into project management practices promotes long-term benefits for both the community and the environment. However, sustainability presents both challenges and opportunities. Fernández-Sánchez and Rodríguez-López (2010) argue that while implementing sustainable practices requires considerable effort and resources, it also offers avenues to enhance project outcomes and competitiveness. Chawla et al. (2018) further highlight the importance of integrating sustainability into risk management, noting the dual benefits of mitigating sustainability-related risks and capitalizing on the market value created by sustainable practices.

Effective stakeholder engagement, beginning in the planning phase, is central to sustainable project outcomes. Engaging stakeholders allows them to influence decisions that directly affect project success, leading to more efficient and meaningful project implementation (World Bank, 2019). This process has also been shown to enhance local ownership and pride, which are key to ensuring that community-based projects endure beyond their initial funding phases (Kumar, 2002). The success of projects financed by international donors often depends on their ability to create long-term sustainable outcomes. These projects address crucial social and economic needs such as agriculture, education, and healthcare, all while promoting practices that support environmental restoration and economic empowerment.

Notably, projects with strong stakeholder engagement often result in job creation, enhanced community relations, and improved living standards. Studies further suggest that involving local stakeholders from the outset fosters a strong sense of ownership, which is critical for the sustained impact of such initiatives (Aaltonen & Sivonen, 2009).

In the realm of project management, planning serves as the cornerstone of successful project execution. It encompasses defining project scope, developing work breakdown structures, scheduling tasks, and identifying potential risks and mitigation strategies. Martens and Carvalho (2017) assert that meticulous planning enhances project outcomes, particularly in large-scale public and infrastructure projects. The direct correlation between effective planning and project success emphasizes the need for thorough preparation in advance of execution to optimize resources and ensure quality (Akinradewo et al., 2019).

Furthermore, project success is not solely dependent on project objectives but also the effectiveness of the management process. While the traditional "iron triangle" (time, cost, and scope) has been the benchmark for assessing project success, modern frameworks incorporate broader dimensions, including quality, stakeholder satisfaction, and sustainability.

In the context of Gulu City, Northern Uganda, community-based organizations (CBOs) have played a significant role in development efforts. However, the success rates of these organizations have been mixed. A study focusing on community participation in solid waste management in Gulu District revealed varying levels of community engagement, which impacted the effectiveness of waste management strategies (RROIJ, 2020). Additionally, the implementation of the Parish Development Model (PDM) in Gulu City has shown positive results despite ongoing challenges, indicating progress towards economic sustainability (DailyExpress, 2025). These insights underscore the critical importance of effective project planning and stakeholder engagement in enhancing the sustainability of community-based projects. By involving local stakeholders from the outset and integrating comprehensive planning strategies, projects can achieve long-term success and contribute meaningfully to community development.

1.2 Problem Statement

Community-based projects implemented by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs) play a crucial role in improving livelihoods in northern Uganda through income generation, agricultural development, and education. However, despite these interventions, sustainability remains a significant challenge. According to the NGOs Forum Annual Report (2019), more than 70% of these projects collapse within five years after being handed over to the local community due to a lack of sustainability mechanisms. This premature failure leads to reduced long-term impact, undermining the benefits achieved during the implementation phase. Many projects prioritize immediate success indicators rather than incorporating sustainability strategies, leading to dependency on external funding (NGOs Forum Report, 2020). Without long-term planning, these initiatives struggle to continue operating once donor support ceases.

A significant factor in project failure is the inadequate involvement of local beneficiaries in decision-making and planning. Uganda Bureau of Statistics (2021) reports that only 40% of projects actively involve local communities, leading to a lack of ownership and responsibility for maintaining the initiatives after funding ends, over 60% of projects do not include adequate training in financial management, entrepreneurship, and resource mobilization, making it difficult for communities to sustain projects independently (World Bank, 2022). Without sufficient capacity-building efforts, beneficiaries lack the skills to manage and maintain these projects effectively.

Northern Uganda has a poverty rate of 61.6%, significantly higher than the national average of 20.3%, despite extensive development interventions (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2021). The failure of projects to provide lasting solutions has contributed to the continued economic struggles of the population. Donors and government agencies have invested millions of dollars in projects that do not achieve long-term success, reducing future funding opportunities. Inefficient use of resources diminishes trust in development initiatives, leading to decreased investment in new projects. The failure of projects to provide sustainable access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities continues to affect over 70% of the population in rural areas (African Development Bank, 2020). This lack of progress hinders efforts to improve the overall well-being of communities in northern Uganda.

Some NGOs have begun offering financial literacy and skills training to local beneficiaries. However, these initiatives are only integrated into 35% of projects, limiting their overall impact (NGOs Forum Report, 2020). Expanding these programs could enhance project sustainability by equipping communities with the necessary skills to manage projects independently. The Ugandan government has introduced community ownership policies aimed at improving project sustainability. However, enforcement remains weak due to limited monitoring and evaluation structures. Strengthening these policies and ensuring proper implementation could improve project longevity. Some organizations have sought collaboration with local businesses to enhance financial sustainability. However, these partnerships cover only 20% of community projects (World Bank, 2022). Expanding these collaborations could provide additional financial and technical support, improving the sustainability of development initiatives.

Therefore, this study seeks to examine the relationship between project planning, stakeholders on the sustainability of community-based projects

1.3 The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to examine the relationship between project planning and stakeholder engagement on the sustainability of community-based projects in Gulu City, Northern Uganda.

1.3.1 Specific Objectives

- I. To examine the influence of stakeholder engagement on the sustainability of community-based organization projects in the city
- ii. To examine the influence of project planning on the sustainability of community-based organizations projects in Gulu City.
- iii. To investigate the combined impact of project planning and stakeholder engagement on the sustainability of community-based projects in Gulu City.

1.4 Research question

- I. How does project planning influence the projects sustainability of community-based projects in Gulu City northern Uganda?
- ii. How does stakeholder involvement affect the project sustainability of the community-based projects in Gulu City?
- iii. what are the combined effects of stakeholder participation and project planning on the project's sustainability of community-based programs in Gulu City?

1.5 Scope of the study

1.5.1 Subject/content Scope

The study examined how project planning and stakeholder engagement influence the sustainability of community-based projects in Gulu City, Northern Uganda. It explores key planning strategies, stakeholder participation, and sustainability factors while assessing challenges and best practices for long-term project success.

1.5.2 Geographical Scope

According to the UBOS poverty index report (2023) shows that northern Uganda is the poorest with a poverty rate of 61.6%. According to the NGOs forum report, (2019) indicates that many NGOs and community-based organizations are actively implementing many development projects in the northern region due to the high poverty levels in the region coupled with poor standards of living of the locals, and low levels of education thus making northern Uganda a key area of interest for the study given the numerous numbers of NGOs and community-based organizations.

1.5.3 Time Scope

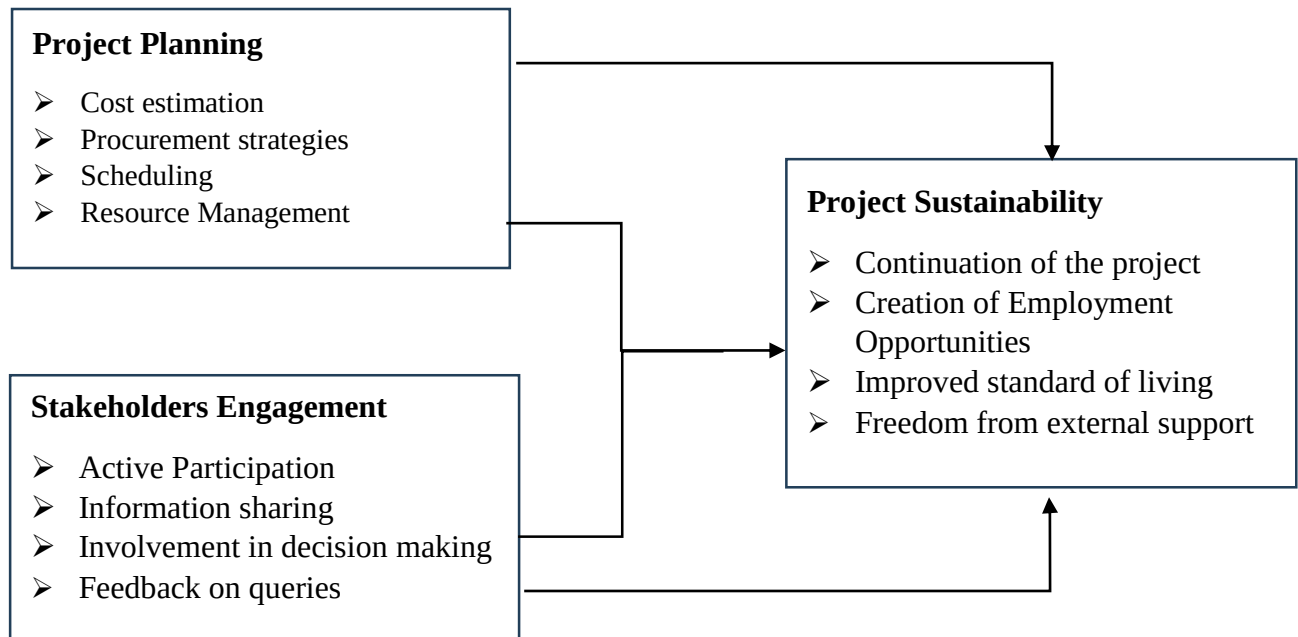
Given the research design, the data was collected from the study population within a period of two months from July to August 2024.

1.6 Significance of the Study

- i. The findings of this study are likely to guide policymakers in making supportive policies and frameworks on various projects.
- ii. The findings of this study are likely to be incorporated into educational curricula and training programs for project management, community development, and sustainability studies.
- iii. The findings of the study are likely to identify the successful strategies and common models, which help build the capacity of local leaders, and community members involved in project implementations.

1.7 Conceptual Framework

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



Source: Yu, M., et al (2018). Armenia, S., et al (2019).

The study was designed with the idea that there are important factors that determine whether community-based projects are sustainable. The sustainability of community-based projects is the dependent variable, project planning and stakeholder participation are the independent factors, as shown in the above image. The conceptual framework shows how important variables relate to one another, providing a theoretical foundation that directs the investigation. The conceptual framework offers a way to comprehend how different elements affect community-based projects' sustainability in Gulu City, Northern Uganda.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

With a focus on stakeholder engagement and project planning, this chapter dives into a thorough examination of the theoretical and empirical literature regarding the sustainability of community-based projects.

2.2 Definition of key Variable

2.2.1 Project Planning

Project planning, as elucidated by the Association for Project Management (2008), involves a systematic process aimed at identifying the necessary resources, actions, and strategies to achieve the objectives of a project. It draws upon organizational expertise, past experiences, and external insights to understand the project's purpose, develop a business case, define deliverables, and formulate a comprehensive execution plan.

2.2.2 Stakeholders' Engagement

The core tenet of corporate social responsibility (CSR), which requires businesses to recognize that their operations depend significantly on their relationships with clients, partners, workers, suppliers, communities, investors, and others, is tied to stakeholder engagement. Engaging stakeholders, sometimes called "dialogue," is crucial to understanding and meeting their expectations, addressing their main concerns, and guaranteeing that there is agreement on the nature of the working definition of corporate social responsibility (CSR) as well as the company's vision and purpose in this regard. (Alan S., 2023)

According to Hohnenjo and Potts (2007), stakeholder engagement refers to both formal and informal means of maintaining contact with those who could have an actual or potential impact on a company's operations. They also noted that engagement entails taking into account and understanding the opinions of those parties, holding them accountable when necessary, and leveraging the knowledge gained from them to spur innovation. The nature and environment of the business operations, as well as the size of the firm, influence the type and extent of participation.

2.2.3 Project sustainability

The application of methods, tools, and techniques to achieve a stated objective while taking into consideration the project outcomes' entire lifecycle to ensure a net positive environmental, social, and economic impact is what is meant by project sustainability in project management, according to (Green Project Management 2023), the global advocate for sustainability in project practice.

2.2.4 Community projects

Any project that is rooted in a community is referred to as a community project. Within a community or a collection of networking organizations, this encompasses a wide range of various topics. Projects can encompass nearly any topic, including the welfare factor, which is the area of concern that is most evident in every society. Examples of welfare community projects include a Christmas supper kitchen for the homeless and an orphanage that is managed and funded locally. The charitable sector is another one that is significant to the community. Community-based charitable initiatives may involve ecological charities that focus on preserving green spaces or, in certain situations, preventing their reduction or elimination. A community-based charitable endeavor would also be an old clothes collection service. One significant subset of community projects that are sometimes disregarded is those with an economic focus, like LETS. Transition Towns are the centerpiece of economic community initiatives. The goal of the majority of economic community projects is to foster some economic independence. Community initiative

2.3 Theoretical framework

Stakeholder management theory

Stakeholder Management Theory, introduced by Freeman (1984), suggests that organizations and projects must consider the interests of all relevant stakeholders to achieve success. This theory posits that effectively managing stakeholder relationships leads to improved project outcomes, as stakeholders provide critical support, resources, and feedback. When applied to community-based projects, the theory underscores the importance of engaging local communities, government agencies, NGOs, and donors to enhance project sustainability.

Project planning is a foundational process that determines the direction and success of community-based projects. According to Stakeholder Management Theory,

early identification and involvement of stakeholders in project planning ensure alignment of project objectives with community needs and expectations.

When stakeholders participate in planning, they contribute to resource mobilization, risk assessment, and decision-making, leading to better-designed and more sustainable projects. Strategic planning helps in anticipating potential challenges and mitigating risks through collaborative problem-solving. A well-structured project plan that includes stakeholder perspectives promotes transparency and accountability, which are essential for long-term project sustainability.

Stakeholder Management Theory effectively explains how project planning and stakeholder engagement influence project sustainability in community-based projects. The theory highlights that involving stakeholders in project planning leads to better resource allocation, risk management, and community ownership, while active stakeholder engagement fosters long-term commitment and support. Therefore, for community-based projects in Gulu City to achieve sustainability, it is essential to adopt inclusive planning processes and robust stakeholder engagement strategies that align with stakeholder expectations and community needs. By doing so, projects can ensure long-term impact and continued benefits for the targeted communities.

2.4 Empirical Literature Review

2.4.1 Project Planning and Project Sustainability

Several scholars emphasize the importance of integrating sustainability considerations into project planning to ensure long-term success and minimal environmental impact. According to Martens and Carvalho (2017), sustainable project management requires a shift in focus from traditional project planning towards incorporating environmental, social, and economic dimensions from the project's inception. Silvius and Schipper (2015) proposed that sustainable project planning should include specific frameworks and models that guide project managers in aligning their projects with sustainable development goals. They argue

that project planning processes must be adapted to incorporate sustainability metrics and lifecycle analysis.

When the project's item, management, or process takes its rightful place in the execution of project proprietor methodologies, the process of planning through and making clear the targets, objectives, and procedures necessary to bring the project through its lifecycle to a successful conclusion. Cleland & Ireland, (2006). Many experts have looked into expanded options that affect project success prediction. (Zwikael & Associates, 2014) The success of a project can be greatly impacted by its planning and selection of the best project lifecycle for it. Naeem, S., et al (2018). Thus, the first hypothesis is derived from the literature listed above. The process of choosing the best tactics, how to organize and schedule project activities, and what resources are required to increase the likelihood of a successful project is called project planning.

2.4.2 Stakeholders' engagement and project sustainability

An organization, person, or group of people with an interest in or impact on a project's implementation is referred to as a stakeholder, Retnoningtyas, H., et al (2020). public project stakeholders can include recipients or participants, funders, vendors, contractors, assessors, county administration, media, etc. Stakeholders in the project have changing demands, interests, and expectations, Schwermer, H. et al (2020). Project performance and sustainability are determined by how managers incorporate needs during implementation and let stakeholders participate in it to ensure that, the most sustainable project decisions are made, effective stakeholder engagement processes should enable parties with stakes to openly express their opinions, thoughts, and ideas. Njue, N. et al (2021).

Variations in the interests, participations, resources, and influence that stakeholders can contribute throughout a project. The extent to which stakeholders' inputs can be accurately anticipated and planned for in achieving long-term project sustainability. Stakeholders' capabilities can vary due to numerous factors such as changes in organizational priorities, resource availability, and individual commitment levels, making it challenging to rely on their consistent support. The unpredictability of stakeholders' contributions can lead to gaps in resource allocation, support, and overall project planning, ultimately affecting the sustainability of the project.

By testing this hypothesis, the researcher can shed a clear light on the extent to which variability in stakeholder involvement affects the predictability and planning of their contributions to project sustainability.

2.4.3 The combined effects of project planning and Stakeholders Engagement on project sustainability

A key component of project management is project planning, which is the methodical allocation and coordination of resources to meet predetermined objectives. Cleland, D. I., & Ireland, L. R. (2007). Thorough project planning aids in the coordination of some responsibilities, such as defining the scope of the project, setting goals, assigning resources, and scheduling tasks. Larson and Gray (2018). Clear, focused, and structured project activities are the result of effective planning, which establishes the foundation for project success.

Kerzner, H. (2022). Organizations can minimize resistance to change, promote project buy-in, and improve stakeholder satisfaction by integrating stakeholders in the design and implementation of projects. Stakeholder involvement and project planning are linked processes that strengthen and support one another.

Organizations that effectively integrate thorough project planning and efficient stakeholder engagement are more likely to achieve sustainable project outcomes compared to those that do not. Projects that involve stakeholders from the beginning and throughout the lifecycle tend to have higher success rates due to increased buy-in and reduced resistance to change.

Proper planning helps in setting realistic objectives and ensures that resources are used efficiently, reducing the risk of project failure. By testing this hypothesis, research can empirically verify the impact of combined project planning and stakeholder engagement on the sustainability of project outcomes.

2.5 Conclusion

The majority of researchers, including Bal B. et al. (2013), and Chifamba (2013), focus more on the positive effects of stakeholder engagement and project planning than on sustainability. The majority of researchers also only discuss the positive effects of stakeholder participation and leave out any potential negative effects on project performance and sustainability. Finding out how stakeholder participation affects project sustainability, however, both favorably and unfavorably, is necessary.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This section presents the research approach that was employed in the study. It includes details on the study population, sample size, sampling technique, research design, data collection, data sources, data collection tools, quality assurance, data collection processes, data analysis, and ethical issues.

3.2 Research Design

Cross-sectional study design involving collecting data from a specific population at one point in time to describe trends, patterns, and relationships (Bryman, 2016). The advantages of this design include cost-effectiveness, quick data collection, and the ability to analyze multiple variables simultaneously (Setia, 2016). Given the study's focus on assessing how project planning and stakeholder engagement influence project sustainability, a cross-sectional approach enables the researcher to gather insights efficiently without requiring long-term follow-up.

3.3 Study Area

The research was conducted in Gulu City, Northern Uganda.

3.4 Study Population

According to the NGOs Forum Report (2023), there were 200 registered community-based organizations (CBOs) operating within Gulu City, which constituted the study population. The unit of analysis was the community-based organizations, while the unit of inquiry comprised the project managers, project coordinators, and procurement officers, who were involved in the planning and execution of various projects.

3.5 Sample Size Determination

The sample size was determined using Krejci and Morgan's table (1970), based on a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error, which are conventional and widely accepted in research. Using this table, a sample size of 127 CBOs was selected. This approach balanced the need for accuracy with the practical limitations of sample size in the field.

For each of the 127 selected CBOs as the unit of analysis, data were collected from 3 respondents: a project manager, a project coordinator, and a project procurement officer making 381 as the unite of inquiry and their responses were aggregated to represent the CBO as a single unit. This aggregation approach was employed in SPSS to ensure that each CBO was uniformly represented in the analysis, regardless of the number of individual responses obtained.

3.6 Data Collection

3.6.1 Data Collection Methods

Quantitative methods were used to collect data, with structured questionnaires distributed to project managers, project coordinators, and procurement project officers. These questionnaires captured data on project planning practices, stakeholder engagement strategies, and indicators of project sustainability.

3.6.2 Data Collection Instrument

Self-administered questionnaires were utilized to gather data. This method allowed for detailed responses from the selected respondents. The questionnaires consisted of closed-ended questions, which provided respondents with a predefined set of responses, making it easier to analyze and quantify the data. Closed-ended questions are particularly useful for collecting quantitative data, allowing for easier coding and statistical analysis. This approach facilitated the generation of significant insights into the study variables.

3.7 Data Validity and Reliability

Validity refers to the degree to which the questionnaire measures what it is intended to measure (Amins, 2007). To ensure validity, the initial version of the questionnaire was drafted and reviewed by the research supervisor. The supervisor assessed the applicability of the questions by ensuring they were relevant to the research objectives, aligned with the topic, and clear. Based on the supervisor's feedback, the researcher incorporated revisions to finalize the questionnaire. The results for CVI are shown in table 1 below:

Table 1: Content Validity Index (CVI Results)

Expert	CVI Score
Expert 1	0.884
Expert 2	0.875
Expert 3	0.899

Source: primary data

As shown above, the results for CVI were above 0.7 which indicates validity of items in the questionnaire.

Reliability was assessed by conducting a pilot test with a small sample of fifteen respondents. The responses were examined for consistency. A Cronbach's alpha score of 0.7 was considered the threshold for reliability. Any deviations from this benchmark would have prompted necessary modifications to the questionnaire to enhance reliability. Reliability results are shown below in table 2.

Table 2: Reliability Results

Variable	No of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Project Planning	16	.726
Stakeholder Involvement	16	.780
Project Sustainability	16	.824

Source: primary data

3.8 Data Processing

Data processing involves several steps: organizing, cleaning, data entry, descriptive analysis, inferential analysis, data visualization, interpretation, and reporting. After data entry, descriptive statistics were used to summarize the data, followed by inferential analysis to test the study hypotheses.

3.9 Data Presentation

The results were presented in a detailed written report that included sections on methodology, objectives, findings, and conclusions. Key findings, implications, and recommendations were highlighted for organizational stakeholders who may not have had the time to review the full report. To enhance understanding, presentation software such as PowerPoint was used to create slides summarizing the key findings, supported by charts, graphs, and other visual aids.

Additionally, research findings were submitted for publication in peer-reviewed academic journals to contribute to the scholarly literature on project management, stakeholder engagement, and community-based organizations.

3.10 Data Sources

Primary data sources were utilized during the study. Data was collected through closed-ended questionnaires that were self-administered to the project managers, project coordinators, and procurement project officers of community-base organizations (CBOs).

3.11 Measurement of Variables

Project planning was measured based on planning effectiveness, resource efficiency, risk identification, and clarity of project goals and objectives (PMBOK Guide, 2021; Kerzner, 2017). These measures provided a comprehensive assessment of how well the project processes were managed.

Stakeholder engagement was evaluated by the number and diversity of stakeholders involved, communication frequency, stakeholder satisfaction, appropriateness of communication, and the degree of involvement in decision-making processes (Freeman, 2010; Bryson, 2011).

Sustainability was measured by the continuity of projects beyond their lifecycle, organizational capacity (e.g., governance, staffing, infrastructure), long-term community benefits, and improvements in community income levels as a result of project implementation (Sachs, 2015; Epstein & Buhovac, 2017).

3.12 Sampling Method

Simple random sampling was used as the primary sampling technique. According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2009), random sampling helps ensure that each member of the population has an equal chance of being selected, minimizing selection bias. Probability sampling methods were used to achieve representativeness of the study population (Creswell, 2014). Random sampling is also straightforward and easy to apply (Trochim, 2006), which makes it suitable for this research. As Fowler (2013) explains, random sampling allows for the calculation of sampling errors and confidence intervals, thus facilitating the generalization of the study results.

3.13 Data Analysis

Data entry and analysis were conducted using SPSS 25.0, a statistical software package for social scientists. The data was analyzed using univariate analyses to focus on individual variables. Descriptive statistics, including means, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages, were employed at the univariate level. Frequency tables were used to represent demographic information such as age, gender, marital status, and education level.

3.14 Ethical Considerations

Before including respondents in the study, informed consent was obtained. Respondents were briefed on the objectives of the study, their roles, and the potential benefits of the research. The researcher ensured that respondents' information was treated confidentially and that their participation remained voluntary throughout the study.

3.15 Unit of analysis

The unit of analysis refers to the primary entity that is being studied and analyzed in the research (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019). this study focuses on Community-Based Organizations' Projects in Gulu City, Northern Uganda

3.16 Unit of inquiries

The unit of inquiry refers to the individuals or groups from whom data will be collected to understand the unit of analysis (Kumar, 2019). In this study, the unit of inquiry includes Project Managers, Coordinators, and procurement project officer.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter contains the presentation, interpretation, and analysis of the findings of the study by the study objectives. The presentation in this chapter shows the findings according to the objectives of the study which were:

- i. To examined the influence of stakeholder engagement on the sustainability of community-based organization projects in the city
- ii. To examined the influence of project planning on the sustainability of community-based organizations projects in Gulu City.
- iii. To examined the combined impact of project planning and stakeholder engagement on the sustainability of community-based projects in Gulu City.

4.2 Response Rate

Not all of the expected participants contributed information. Of the 381 respondents targeted, only 270 provided data with three respondents from each organization. This translates to a response rate of 70.1 percent. Given that previous research surveys in Uganda. Baruch, Y., & Holtom, B. C. (2008). reported an average response rate of 60 percent, the rate achieved here surpasses that standard and is regarded as sufficient for this study.

4.3 Demographic Characteristics

The study gathered information on the respondents regarding their gender, age, marital status, and education level. The results are in Table 3 below:

Table 3: Characteristics of respondents (N=270)

Parameter	Frequency	%
Gender of the respondents		
Male	155	57.4
Female	115	42.6
Total	270	100.0
Age of the Respondents		
18-29	20	7.4
30-39	190	70.4
40-49	4	1.5
50 and above	56	20.7
Total	270	100.0
Marital Status		
Single	20	7.4
Married	190	70.4
Divorced	60	22.2
Total	270	100.0
Highest Education Qualifications attained		
Diploma	15	5.6
Degree	196	72.6
Master degree	48	17.8
PHD	11	4.0
Total	270	100.0

Source: primary data

Gender of the Respondents: The sample comprises 57.4% male and 42.6% female respondents, indicating a higher representation of males. This disparity suggests that males are more dominant in the roles surveyed within the community-based organizations (CBOs) in Gulu City. This gender distribution might reflect existing dynamics in employment and leadership positions within the CBOs, which could have implications for the planning and implementation of projects, potentially affecting the perspectives on stakeholder engagement and project sustainability.

Age of the Respondents: The majority of respondents fall within the 30-39 age group, accounting for 70.4% of the sample. This indicates that most participants are in their prime working years, likely with substantial experience in project management. A smaller proportion of respondents are in the 50 and above age group (20.7%), suggesting some level of seniority and long-term involvement in the projects. Only 7.4% of respondents are aged 18-29, and a minimal 1.5% fall within the 40-49 age range. This distribution reflects a workforce with a balance of middle-aged professionals and a moderate presence of older, possibly more experienced individuals, which might influence project strategies and sustainability practices.

Marital Status of the Respondents: The majority of respondents (70.4%) are married, while only 7.4% are single and 22.2% are divorced. This high proportion of married individuals may indicate a level of stability and long-term commitment, potentially affecting their approach to project planning and sustainability in community-based projects. Married respondents may have a vested interest in the success of the projects due to their possible direct impact on household welfare and community development.

Highest Education Qualifications Attained: Most respondents (72.6%) have completed a degree level, and 17.8% have a master's level. A small percentage of the sample possesses diploma level (5.6%), and 4.1% have PHD level. This distribution suggests that the workforce involved in CBO projects is moderately educated, which may affect the level of complexity they can handle in project planning and execution. The relatively low proportion of tertiary-educated individuals might reflect limited access to higher education in the region, potentially impacting the implementation of more advanced project management practices within the CBOs.

4.4 Pearson's Correlation Results

Pearson correlation analysis is used when assessing the strength and direction of a linear relationship between two continuous independent variables and continuous dependent variables, offering insights into how each predictor contributes to the variation in the outcome while accounting for the influence of the other predictors. It provides a statistical measure (called the Pearson correlation coefficient r) that tells you how strongly two variables are related to each other, with values ranging from -1 to +1.

The first two objectives of the study focused on examining the relationships between the variables. To achieve this, the Pearson (r) correlation coefficient was calculated, as it is appropriate for interval data and allows for assessing both the direction and strength of these relationships. Table 4 below presents the Pearson Correlation Coefficients for the variables analysed in the study.

Table 4: Pearson Correlation Results

Variable/Indicator	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1. Cost Estimation	1														
2. Procurement Strategies	.344**	1													
3. Scheduling	.091	.515**	1												
4. Resources Management	.752**	.191**	.095	1											
5. Project Planning	.776**	.723**	.609**	.716**	1										
6. Active Participation	.358**	.125*	.136*	.252**	.311**	1									
7. Information Sharing	.317**	.081	.115	.312**	.293**	.469**	1								
8. Decision Involvement	.292**	.100	-.051	.247**	.207**	.189**	.364**	1							
9. Feedback On Inquiries	.209**	-.070	-.133*	.260**	.092	.260**	.489**	.524**	1						
10. Stakeholders Engagement	.390**	.067	-.002	.359**	.288**	.627**	.738**	.730**	.821**	1					
11. Project Continuation	.437**	.316**	.247**	.235**	.440**	.125*	.349**	.184**	.022	.201**	1				
12. Opportunity Creation	.608**	.311**	-.005	.447**	.481**	.213**	.242**	.292**	.335**	.377**	.369**	1			
13. Improved Standards	.570**	.272**	-.019	.414**	.438**	.120*	.027	.254**	.253**	.246**	.119	.654**	1		
14. Freedom From External Support	.489**	.035	-.205**	.372**	.244**	.344**	.430**	.237**	.326**	.443**	.142*	.488**	.437**	1	
15. Project Sustainability	.718**	.290**	-.028	.505**	.526**	.294**	.375**	.331**	.336**	.451**	.504**	.836**	.761**	.783**	1

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

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

Table 5 *Pearson Correlation of the relationship of the variables*

Variables	1	2	3
1. Project Planning	1		
2. Stakeholder engagement	.344**	1	
3. Project Sustainability	.526**	.451**	1

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

4.5.1 The Relationship Between Stakeholder Engagement on Project Sustainability

The correlation results indicate that stakeholder engagement has a moderate positive influence on project sustainability, with a correlation coefficient of $r = .451$ (significant at $p < .01$). This finding suggests that active participation, information sharing, involvement in decision-making, and feedback on inquiries are crucial components of stakeholder engagement that collectively contribute to the sustainability of projects.

Breaking down the indicators, active participation shows a moderate positive correlation with project sustainability ($r = .294$, significant at $p < .01$), highlighting that when stakeholders are actively involved in project activities, it creates a sense of ownership and commitment, which supports the continuation and success of the project. Information sharing has a positive correlation ($r = .375$, significant at $p < .01$) with sustainability, implying that transparent and timely communication allows stakeholders to be informed and engaged in the project's progress, contributing to informed decision-making and fostering trust. Involvement in decision-making also positively correlates with project sustainability ($r = .331$, significant at $p < .01$), indicating that when stakeholders are included in key decisions, their diverse perspectives and input can lead to more robust strategies that enhance project outcomes. Feedback on inquiries has a moderate correlation ($r = .336$, significant at $p < .01$), suggesting that providing stakeholders with channels to voice their concerns and offer feedback can improve project execution and alignment with stakeholder expectations, ultimately boosting project sustainability.

4.5.2 The Relationship Between Project Planning on Project Sustainability

The results reveal a strong positive correlation between project planning and project sustainability, with a coefficient of $r = .526$ (significant at $p < .01$). This indicates that effective project planning significantly contributes to the long-term success and sustainability of community-based projects. The indicators of project planning—cost estimation, procurement strategies, scheduling, and resource management—are all essential components that help structure the project for optimal performance.

Cost estimation demonstrates a strong positive correlation with project sustainability ($r = .718$, significant at $p < .01$), emphasizing that accurately forecasting costs helps in securing adequate funding, allocating resources efficiently, and avoiding budget overruns, all of which are crucial for the project's continued success. Procurement strategies have a positive but moderate correlation with sustainability ($r = .290$, significant at $p < .01$), indicating that strategic procurement of goods and services can impact the smooth flow of project activities and ensure that the necessary inputs are available to achieve project goals. Scheduling shows a weak but negative correlation with project sustainability ($r = -.028$), suggesting that merely setting timelines without incorporating flexibility or addressing unexpected changes may not always enhance sustainability. This could imply that rigid scheduling might overlook the dynamic nature of community projects. Resource management, on the other hand, has a moderate positive correlation ($r = .505$, significant at $p < .01$), indicating that the effective allocation and utilization of resources are vital for achieving project milestones and ensuring the project's longevity.

4.6 Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis is used to determine the impact of multiple independent variables on a single dependent variable, offering insights into how each predictor contributes to the variation in the outcome while accounting for the influence of the other predictors (Field, 2018). To evaluate the predictive strength and combined influence of the independent variables on the dependent variable, a multiple regression analysis was conducted using SPSS version 26. The results are presented below.

Table 6: Regression Results**Coefficients^a**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.176	.307		.572	.568
	Project Planning	.587	.069	.432	8.552	.000
	Stakeholders Engagement	.443	.069	.326	6.449	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Project Sustainability

Source: primary data

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.612 ^a	.374	.370	.48242

a. Predictors: (Constant), Stakeholders Engagement, Project Planning

4.6.1 The combined impact of project planning and stakeholder engagement on the sustainability of community-based projects in Gulu City

The Model Summary in Table 5 indicates a moderate positive relationship between the combined influence of project planning and stakeholder engagement on project sustainability, with an R-value of .612. The R Square value of .374 signifies that approximately 37.4% of the variance in project sustainability can be explained by the combined effect of project planning and stakeholder engagement. The Adjusted R Square value of .370 accounts for the number of predictors in the model, affirming that even when adjusting for degrees of freedom, about 37% of the variation in project sustainability is attributable to these two independent variables. This result suggests that while project planning and stakeholder engagement significantly contribute to sustainability, other factors not included in this model may also impact project sustainability.

The Coefficients table further explores the individual contributions of the two independent variables. Project Planning has an unstandardized coefficient (B = .587) and a standardized Beta value of .432, indicating that for every one-unit increase in project planning, project sustainability increases by approximately 0.587 units. The t-value of 8.552 and the p-value of .000 confirm that this influence is statistically significant. This result implies that effective

project planning, which encompasses cost estimation, procurement strategies, scheduling, and resource management, is a key predictor of project sustainability in community-based projects in Gulu City. The stronger Beta value for project planning suggests that it plays a slightly more significant role in enhancing project sustainability compared to stakeholder engagement.

Stakeholder Engagement also has a notable impact on project sustainability, with an unstandardized coefficient ($B = .443$) and a standardized Beta value of .326. This indicates that a one-unit increase in stakeholder engagement leads to an approximate 0.443-unit increase in project sustainability. The t-value of 6.449 and p-value demonstrate that this influence is statistically significant. This suggests that involving stakeholders through active participation, information sharing, decision-making involvement, and feedback mechanisms contributes positively to the sustainability of projects. However, the slightly lower Beta value compared to project planning implies that, while stakeholder engagement is crucial, project planning exerts a more substantial influence on the overall sustainability of community-based projects in Gulu City. Together, these findings underscore the importance of integrating both effective planning and active stakeholder engagement to enhance the sustainability of such projects.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter is organized into five sections. They include discussions about the research objectives. The second section focuses on conclusions while the third section presents recommendations. After this are the proposed areas for further research and finally there are the limitations encountered in carrying out this study.

5.2 Discussion of the Findings

5.2.1. The Influence of Stakeholder Engagement on Project Sustainability

Stakeholder engagement is a multifaceted process that significantly influences the sustainability of community-based projects. Active participation fosters ownership and capacity-building; information sharing promotes trust and accountability; involvement in decision-making ensures alignment with stakeholder needs and adaptability; and effective feedback mechanisms support continuous improvement and stakeholder satisfaction. For projects to be truly sustainable, they must foster a deep, meaningful, and constant relationship with their stakeholders, ensuring that all voices are heard, valued, and integrated into the project's lifecycle. Through these practices, community-based projects can become more resilient, adaptable, and capable of delivering long-term benefits to their stakeholders.

The findings of this study can be interpreted through the lens of the stakeholder management Theory, which suggests that stakeholder engagement is a crucial factor in creating long-term, sustainable changes in community-based projects. According to this theory, sustainable outcomes are achieved when projects managers engage stakeholders in a way that aligns their interests and capacities with the project's objectives. The results of this study affirm the theory by showing that when stakeholders are actively involved in decision-making and information-sharing processes, the chances of achieving sustainable outcomes increase. This alignment between stakeholders' contributions and project goals ensures that projects are not only implemented effectively but also maintained and supported by the very communities they are intended to benefit.

The researcher views stakeholder engagement as more than just a procedural element of project management; it is a strategic tool that can enhance project sustainability when handled thoughtfully. This aligns with the stakeholder's management Theory proposition that achieving lasting impacts requires engaging stakeholders who have the capacity and vested interest in the project's success. By ensuring active participation and regular communication with stakeholders, project managers can mitigate risks, anticipate challenges, and adapt their strategies to the evolving needs of the community. This dynamic engagement helps build resilience into the project, ensuring that it can withstand both internal and external pressures over time.

5.2.2 The Influence of Project Planning on Project Sustainability

Project planning plays a critical role in ensuring the sustainability of community-based projects and other initiatives. Accurate cost estimation ensures financial viability and budgetary control, while effective procurement strategies secure quality resources and support ethical practices that enhance sustainability. Proper scheduling minimizes delays, promotes efficient resource allocation, and improves project adaptability, while sound resource management ensures that human, financial, and natural resources are used prudently and efficiently. Each of these planning indicators is interconnected, and their collective impact directly influences the long-term success and sustainability of a project. Effective project planning not only ensures that the project can be completed on time and within budget but also lays the groundwork for maintaining its benefits over the long term. This comprehensive approach to planning ensures that projects are not only executed efficiently but also contribute to broader development goals. Similarly, Silvius and Schipper (2020) advocate for the inclusion of sustainability frameworks and models in project planning to guide managers in aligning their efforts with sustainable development objectives. This focus on sustainability metrics, such as lifecycle analysis, supports the notion that proper planning leads to long-term project success, as indicated by the correlation between project planning and sustainability in this study.

5.2.3 The combined effects of project planning and Stakeholders Engagement on project sustainability

The findings from the multiple regression analysis demonstrate a moderate relationship between project planning, stakeholder engagement, and project sustainability. Together, these independent variables explain approximately 37% of the variance in project sustainability. Project planning plays a critical role in ensuring the sustainability of community-based

projects and other initiatives. Accurate cost estimation ensures financial viability and budgetary control, while effective procurement strategies secure quality resources and support ethical practices that enhance sustainability. Proper scheduling minimizes delays, promotes efficient resource allocation, and improves project adaptability, while sound resource management ensures that human, financial, and natural resources are used prudently and efficiently. Each of these planning indicators is interconnected, and their collective impact directly influences the long-term success and sustainability of a project. Effective project planning not only ensures that the project can be completed on time and within budget but also lays the groundwork for maintaining its benefits over the long term. The study's findings align with much of the existing literature on the combined impact of project planning and stakeholder engagement on project sustainability. Kerzner (2022) emphasizes that methodical project planning ensures that resources are allocated efficiently and goals are met, which supports the finding that planning plays a critical role in driving project sustainability. Similarly, Silvius and Schipper (2021) suggest that well-structured planning provides a clear roadmap for project success by helping to identify and mitigate risks. These scholars agree with the study's result that project planning is a strong predictor of sustainability. Additionally, Galvin et al. (2021) argue that risk identification and mitigation, facilitated by comprehensive planning, are key to preventing project failures, further corroborating the study's findings.

Stakeholder engagement, as highlighted by Eskerod and Huemann (2013), is also critical for building relationships and securing stakeholder buy-in, which ultimately promotes project sustainability. Reed et al. (2019) argue that early and ongoing stakeholder involvement helps to minimize resistance to change and ensure that project objectives align with stakeholder interests, mirroring the findings of this study. However, Ugochukwu et al. (2020) provide a nuanced perspective by suggesting that stakeholder engagement can sometimes lead to challenges in decision-making due to conflicting interests and priorities. This contrasts with the current study, which finds stakeholder engagement to be universally positive for sustainability. The contradiction could stem from varying contexts in which stakeholder engagement occurs, where certain projects may benefit from engagement while others may face difficulties due to conflicting stakeholder objectives. Still, the general consensus in the literature aligns with the study's findings that effective engagement enhances project sustainability by fostering collaboration and reducing resistance to project implementation.

Additionally, some scholars, such as Larson and Gray (2018), stress that the link between project planning and stakeholder engagement is symbiotic. Effective planning requires an understanding of stakeholder needs, while engagement informs and improves the planning process by providing real-time feedback. This reinforces the study's finding that these two processes are not mutually exclusive but rather complementary. Proper stakeholder engagement allows project managers to anticipate and address challenges early in the planning phase, further increasing the likelihood of project sustainability. Crawford and Associates (2005) also support this view, emphasizing that engaging stakeholders early allows for the adjustment of project plans to meet evolving needs.

The findings of this study can be interpreted through the lens of the stakeholder's management Theory, which posits that well-structured planning and active stakeholder engagement are fundamental drivers of sustainable project outcomes. According to the stakeholder's management Theory, the achievement of long-term sustainable impacts is contingent on the deliberate design of interventions that integrate multiple perspectives, such as those of stakeholders, with clearly defined goals and processes. The study's results align with this theory by demonstrating that both project planning and stakeholder engagement contribute significantly to sustainability, with planning providing the structural framework and engagement ensuring ongoing collaboration and adaptation. This balance of structure and flexibility is crucial in ensuring that projects remain aligned with their objectives while adapting to evolving stakeholder needs and challenges.

From the researcher's perspective, the synergy between project planning and stakeholder engagement cannot be overstated. While the study indicates that project planning has a slightly stronger effect on sustainability, the researcher believes that stakeholder engagement provides the necessary flexibility that complements the rigidity of planning. In practical terms, this means that well-planned projects are more likely to be successful when they incorporate continuous feedback from stakeholders, allowing for adjustments that ensure long-term sustainability. The researcher also recognizes that while the statistical results show a stronger influence of planning, the dynamic nature of projects often necessitates a more nuanced understanding of the role that stakeholder engagement plays in addressing unforeseen challenges and opportunities that arise during implementation.

Furthermore, the researcher sees project planning as a foundational activity that benefits greatly from stakeholder involvement. As the literature suggests, successful projects often

integrate stakeholder feedback into the planning process, ensuring that the project's objectives align with the needs and expectations of those who are directly or indirectly affected. This view aligns with the stakeholder's management Theory, which emphasizes the importance of co-creation and collaboration in achieving sustainable outcomes. The researcher acknowledges that while project planning provides the roadmap, stakeholder engagement ensures that the project stays on track by offering critical insights that might not have been considered during the initial planning phase.

5.3 Conclusions

In conclusion, the findings on the influence of stakeholder engagement on project sustainability demonstrate a clear, positive relationship between the two variables. Active participation, information sharing, and involvement in decision-making play vital roles in fostering ownership and long-term commitment from stakeholders. This engagement helps address challenges early, aligns project outcomes with community needs, and leads to more sustainable projects that continue beyond their initial phases. The statistical evidence shows that effective stakeholder engagement significantly contributes to project sustainability by ensuring that projects are not only well-received but also actively supported by the communities and individuals involved. However, it is important to note that managing diverse stakeholder interests requires careful planning and flexibility to accommodate evolving expectations.

The findings on the influence of project planning on project sustainability demonstrate a strong positive relationship between the two variables, reinforcing the critical role that effective planning plays in the long-term success of community-based projects. Elements such as cost estimation, procurement strategies, scheduling, and resource management are integral to ensuring that projects are executed efficiently, with minimal disruptions and risks. These aspects of planning not only contribute to the timely completion of project activities but also ensure that resources are used effectively, increasing the likelihood that projects will continue to deliver benefits beyond their initial phases. The statistical evidence highlights that well-planned projects are more likely to remain viable over time, create job opportunities, improve living standards, and reduce reliance on external support. However, the findings also emphasize the importance of flexibility in planning, particularly for novel or unprecedented projects, where initial estimations and strategies may require ongoing adjustments to address unforeseen challenges and sustain long-term project goals.

The combined influence of project planning and stakeholder engagement significantly contributes to project sustainability. The findings confirm that both elements are crucial, with project planning providing the necessary structure, clear goals, and resource allocation, while stakeholder engagement ensures ongoing support, collaboration, and adaptability throughout the project lifecycle. The study highlights that while project planning has a slightly stronger predictive influence on sustainability, the role of stakeholder engagement remains vital in addressing challenges, aligning project objectives with stakeholder needs, and fostering ownership among project participants. The integration of these two variables is essential for ensuring that community-based projects not only meet their immediate goals but also achieve long-term, sustainable outcomes. Together, they create a balanced approach where structured planning is supported by continuous stakeholder input, resulting in projects that are resilient and adaptable to changing circumstances.

5.4 Recommendations

Establish clear, consistent, and inclusive communication platforms that allow all stakeholders (community members, donors, local government, etc.) to provide feedback and contribute to decision-making processes.

Organize regular workshops and training sessions for stakeholders to ensure they understand the project goals, processes, and their roles. This helps in increasing ownership and commitment.

Ensure that all relevant community groups, especially marginalized ones, are included in the engagement process. This ensures a holistic approach and helps in addressing diverse needs.

Ensure that the planning phase covers all aspects of the project lifecycle budgeting, risk management, and resource allocation to ensure long-term sustainability.

During the planning process, integrate sustainability metrics such as communication matrix, procurement strategies, and well-scheduled activities to have a great impact on social, and financial viability to track progress toward project sustainability.

Involve the community from the outset in project planning, which will align project goals with the community's actual needs and increase sustainability.

Establish feasible phased project milestones that align with the community-based organizations' resources and capacities.

Create a framework where stakeholder input is continuously sought during the project planning phase and integrated into project execution, which ensures the project remains adaptable and relevant.

Implement participatory monitoring and evaluation (M&E) mechanisms where stakeholders contribute to assessing the project's progress and provide feedback on project planning and execution. This iterative feedback loop improves both project design and stakeholder satisfaction.

Foster partnerships between the community, local government, NGOs, and private entities to pool resources and expertise for enhanced sustainability. A collaborative approach creates a sense of shared responsibility for project outcomes.

These recommendations aim to enhance the sustainability of community-based organization projects by ensuring that both stakeholder engagement and project planning are effectively integrated.

5.5 Limitations to the Study

One of the limitations encountered in this study was the challenge of obtaining a sufficient response rate from the targeted participants. Given their busy schedules and competing priorities, some participants were unable to provide timely responses, which could have impacted the reliability and representativeness of the data collected. To mitigate this, multiple follow-up reminders were sent, and participants were given extended deadlines to complete the surveys, resulting in a satisfactory response rate.

Another limitation was the logistical difficulty associated with administering surveys across dispersed community-based organizations in and around Gulu City. The geographical spread of these organizations posed a challenge in ensuring equal representation within the sample. This limitation was addressed by employing local coordinators familiar with the region to

help distribute and collect the questionnaires, ensuring a more efficient data collection process.

Lastly, the cross-sectional nature of the study limited its ability to capture the evolution of project sustainability over time. Since data were collected at a single point, long-term patterns and changes in project outcomes may have been overlooked. However, this limitation was mitigated by using established sustainability indicators that provided a reliable snapshot of the project's current status, offering valuable insights into their long-term potential based on existing data.

5.6 Areas for Further Study

Given the overall percentage of 37.0%, of the influence of the two variables, this indicates that other factors affect sustainability, other than project planning and stakeholder engagement thus Future research could explore, additional factors influencing the sustainability of community-based projects, such as the role of cultural dynamics, local governance, and external donor policies. Understanding these elements would provide a more comprehensive view of the variables that impact long-term project success.

Comparative studies across different regions within Uganda or other developing countries could be valuable in testing the generalizability of the current findings. Such research would help determine whether the relationships between project planning, stakeholder engagement, and project sustainability hold true in other contexts or if regional variations exist.

A longitudinal study could offer insights into the long-term effects of project planning and stakeholder engagement on project sustainability. Tracking these variables over an extended period would allow researchers to observe how project outcomes evolve and whether initial planning efforts continue to influence sustainability in the long run.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Research Participant,

I am a postgraduate student pursuing a Master of Business Administration at Makerere University. I am undertaking a study on “project planning, stakeholder engagement, and project sustainability of community-based projects in Gulu City, Northern Uganda, as a partial fulfilment for the award of the Master of Business Administration. You have been identified as a resourceful person in this study. Kindly answer the questions in this questionnaire which is intended for academic purposes only. the information provided will be handled with the utmost confidentiality. I thank you in advance for your time and response.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHICS

[Tick in the box that suits your response OR fill in the right response in the space provided]

1. Gender:	1. Male	
	2. Female	

2. Age:	1. 18-29	
	2. 30-39	
	3. 40-49 years	
	4. 50 years and above	
3. Education level	1. Diploma	
	2. Degree	
	3. Master's degree	
	4. PHD	
4. Marital status	Single	
	Married	
	Divorced/Separated	

Project planning

Below are several statements about the effect of project planning on project sustainability. Please rate your extent of agreement with the following statements. Where, SA= Strongly Agree, A= Agree, U= Uncertain, D= Disagree, SD= Strongly Disagree.

Cost estimation

Statement	SD	D	U	A	SA
The project team utilized the bottom-up costing method during the planning process to estimate the project's expenses accurately in this organization.					
Did the project team in this organization employ the activity-based costing method during the planning phase to allocate costs to specific project activities or tasks in this organisation?					
The project team relied on expert judgment as a costing method during various stages of the planning process to assess resource requirements and associated expenses.					
The project team integrated the cost of quality estimation methods into the planning process to determine the financial implications of ensuring					

high-quality deliverables and outcomes in your organization.					
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Procurement strategies

Statement	SD	D	U	A	SA
Procurement contracts had Strategic Partnerships elements being incorporated during the planning process in your organisation.					
Risk Sharing agreement in the contract contracts clause was incorporated during the planning process in this organisation.					
Framework Agreement contracts management strategies were incorporated in the burying planning process by your team.					
There were multiple sourcing strategies during the planning process in your organisation.					

Scheduling

Statement	SD	D	U	A	SA
Did your organisation have activity Sequencing done well during the planning process of the projects?					
The communication frequency schedule was made during the planning process of the project by your team.					
There were Risk Assessment and mitigation strategies planned for during the planning process by your project teams.					
Critical Path Analysis management was incorporated during the planning process of the project in your organisation.					

Resources management

Statement	SD	D	U	A	SA
Did your project team have resource estimation done properly during the planning process?					
Did the resource allocation was done properly against the activities planned for during the design process in your organisation?					
Resource Constraints Management Plan was incorporated during the planning processes of the project in your organisation.					
Resource Contingency Planning was considered during the planning process of the project in this organisation.					

Stakeholders' engagement

Below are several statements about Stakeholders' engagement in project sustainability. Please rate your extent of agreement with the following statements. Where, SA= Strongly Agree, A= Agree, U= Uncertain, D= Disagree, SD= Strongly Disagree

Active participation

Statement	SD	D	U	A	SA
There are Stakeholder Buy-In due to the active participation of the stakeholders in your organization.					
There has been improved Decision-Making as a result of the active participation of the stakeholders in this organisation.					
Identification of Risks and Opportunities was possible due to the active participation of the stakeholders in this organisation.					
Enhanced Innovation and Creativity have been due to the active participation of stakeholders in this organisation.					

Information Sharing

Statement	SD	D	U	A	SA
Information sharing has led to communication effectiveness among different stakeholders.					
Information sharing through the establishment channels impacted the management of stakeholders in this organisation.					
Information sharing by stakeholders Provided Regular Updates on the project status in this organisation in this organisation.					
Tailored Communication to Stakeholders leads to successful stakeholder engagement in this organization.					

Involvement in decision-making

Statement	SD	D	U	A	SA
Involvement of stakeholders in decision-making, Encouraged Participatory Decision-Making by the stakeholders in the project design and implementation in this organisation.					
Involvement of stakeholders in decision-making Promoted Consensus-Building during the designing and implementation of the projects by this organisation.					
Involvement in the decision-making of the stakeholders leads to the Consideration of Stakeholders' interests during the design and implementation of the projects implemented by this organisation.					
Involvement in decision-making Clearly Defines the Decision-Making Roles of the different stakeholders in this organization.					

Feedback on enquires

Statement	SD	D	U	A	SA
Conciseness for feedback on inquiries of Information during the project cycles was exercised in this organisation during implementation.					
Responses to inquiries have been timely as required by this organization.					
Information has been provided transparently in this organisation after inquiries during the project lifecycle.					
Alternative information Solutions were offered after information was enquired about during project lifecycles as required by this organisation.					

Project sustainability

Below are several statements about **current strategies and approaches employed by community-based projects in Gulu City in promoting long-term sustainability**. Please rate your extent of agreement with the following statements. Where, SA= Strongly Agree, A= Agree, U= Uncertain, D= Disagree, SD= Strongly Disagree

Continuation of the projects

Statement	SD	D	U	A	SA
The projects this organization implemented continued to have a Long-Term Impact on the lives of the beneficiaries.					
There is Economic Viability within the community as a result of the projects implemented by this organisation.					
The capacity of the local communities and beneficiaries enhanced after the lifecycles of the projects implemented by this organisation.					
The projects implemented by this organization have Continuously improved its operations and impact on the lives of the beneficiaries.					

Creation of employment opportunities

Statement	SD	D	U	A	SA
The projects this organization implemented have Long-Term Employment Stability after the lifespan.					
There is enhanced Local Hiring and Capacity Building as a result of the project being implemented by this organisation.					
There is Multiplier Effects as a result of the project implemented by this organisation.					
As a result of the projects implemented by this organization, there are diverse employment Sectors.					

Improved standards of living

Statement	SD	D	U	A	SA
The projects your organization implemented have led to the increased Income Levels of the beneficiaries.					
The project has led to Enhanced Access to Basic Services for the different stakeholders.					
There have been Enhanced Educational Opportunities as a result of the projects being implemented by this organisation.					
There have been increased employment and economic Opportunities as a result of the project being implemented by this organisation.					

Freedom from any external support

Statement	SD	D	U	A	SA
The Ownership and Governance of the projects that has been implemented by this organization have been taken over by the local beneficiaries.					
The projects implemented by this organization became resource-self-sufficient after its lifecycle.					
The project handled by your organization becomes Financially independent of any external support.					
The projects that have been implemented by your organisation have some Long-Term self-sustaining Planning after implementation.					

APPENDIX B: LISTS OF NAMES OF CBOS

NAMES OF CBOS OPERATING IN AND AROUND GULU CITY

1. Acholi Community Health Initiative (ACHI)
2. Gulu Safe Motherhood Foundation
3. Gulu Urban Health Watch
4. THRIVE Gulu
5. SOS Children's Village Gulu
6. Mission Uganda (Mission for Action & Humanitarian Agency)
7. Friends of Children Circle (FOCC) Uganda
8. Gulu Youth Empowerment Network
9. Gulu Urban Health Outreach CBO
10. Gulu Women's Savings and Loan Cooperative
11. Gulu Small Business Mentorship Program
12. Acholi Disabilities Health and Rights CBO
13. Gulu Environmental Conservation Alliance
14. Gulu Refugee-Host Integration Network
15. Gulu Safe Motherhood and Child Health CBO
16. Gulu Women's Legal Aid Clinic
17. Acholi Mental Health & Peace NGO
18. Gulu Community Disaster Preparedness Group
19. Gulu Women's Agro-Processing Cooperative
20. Gulu Youth Sports and Mentorship Club
21. Gulu Peace Garden Community Project
22. GWED-G (Gulu Women's Economic Dev. & Globalization)
23. Gulu Girls STEM and Leadership Academy
24. Gulu Early Childhood Nutrition Network
25. Gulu Village Savings & Education Group
26. Northern Uganda Community Health Defenders
27. Gulu Community Health Theatre Group
28. Gulu Women's Cooperative Bakery
29. Gulu Water Harvesting and Sanitation CBO
30. Gulu Youth Creative Writers for Peace
31. Gulu Senior Citizens Wisdom Collective
32. Agago Reproductive Health Alliance
33. Northern Uganda Mental Health Coalition
34. Women's Health Empowerment Trust
35. Gulu Child Nutrition and Care Organization
36. Gulu Health Volunteer Network
37. Gulu Youth Sexual Health Advocacy Forum
38. Agago Clean Water Access Project
39. Kitgum Women's Clinic Support CBO
40. Gulu Health Information Access Center
41. Acholi Medical Supply Coordination Network

42. Gulu Regional Mental Support Hub
43. Kitgum Emergency Health Volunteers
44. Lamwo Adolescent SRH Circle
45. Gulu Disability Health Outreach
46. Acholi Herbal Medicine Practitioners Union
47. Pader Safe Water Education Network
48. Acholi Health Accountability Coalition
49. Acholi Child and Family Programme (ACFP)
50. Gulu Literacy and Learning Foundation
51. Lamwo Girls Education Empowerment CBO
52. Kitgum Early Childhood Development Network
53. Agago School Dropout Prevention Project
54. Pader School Infrastructure & Support Agency
55. Lamwo Youth Literacy Program
56. Kitgum Book for Every Child NGO
57. Agago Orphans and Education Support CBO
58. Gulu Inclusive Education Platform
59. Acholi Teacher Empowerment Forum
60. Kitgum Child Safety Network
61. Lamwo Community Schooling Support
62. Gulu Digital Learning Access CBO
63. Pader Community Child Sponsorship Network
64. Acholi Education Advancement Alliance
65. Kitgum After-School Learning Center
66. Agago Girls Stay in School Project
67. Gulu Technical and Vocational Institute NGO
68. Lamwo Community Library Association
69. Gulu Children's Rights and Literacy Club
70. Acholi Bursary and Scholarship Fund
71. Agago Refugee Child Education Forum
72. Gulu School Meals & Health CBO
73. Lamwo Education Access Network
74. Kitgum Talent and Education Circle
75. Pader Youth Education Advancement Group
76. Gulu Early Learning and Development CBO
77. Kitgum School Hygiene Club Network
78. Lamwo Teenage Mothers Education Project
79. Gulu School Leadership Training Initiative
80. Agago Community Education Empowerment
81. Acholi Education Justice and Access Trust
82. Gulu Remedial Learning Support Program
83. Pader Community Literacy Partners
84. Lamwo School Infrastructure Advocates
85. Northern Uganda School Sponsorship Collective
86. Agago Farmers Empowerment Union
87. Kitgum Women Tailors Cooperative
88. Pader Youth Agribusiness Incubator
89. Lamwo Village Savings and Loan Association
90. Gulu Community Market Development Network
91. Acholi Microfinance and Savings Trust

92. Kitgum Women's Entrepreneurship Forum
93. Gulu Rural Business Hub
94. Lamwo Skills for Youth Initiative
95. Acholi Women Livelihoods Empowerment Society
96. Pader Crafts and Culture Market Collective
97. Gulu Smallholder Farmer Innovation Group
98. Kitgum Agri-Market Linkages NGO
99. Lamwo Bee Keepers Cooperative Society
100. Acholi Youth Job Skills Training Network
101. Gulu Women Poultry Farmers Union
102. Pader Rural Livelihood Recovery Program
103. Agago Agricultural Training Center
104. Kitgum Cooperative Entrepreneurship Forum
105. Lamwo Women Market Vendors Association
106. Gulu Brickmakers and Youth Builders Union
107. Acholi Youth Apprenticeship Project
108. Kitgum Family Economic Upliftment Group
109. Pader Solar Entrepreneurs CBO
110. Acholi Cash Crop Development Association
111. Kitgum Women-led Agribusiness Trust
112. Lamwo Youth Empowerment for Employment
113. Pader Textile and Tailoring Association
114. Gulu Economic Rights & Access Foundation
115. Kitgum Market-Based Skills Training Program
116. Agago Financial Literacy Advocates
117. Gulu Community Empowerment Bank
118. Pader Business Development Network
119. Acholi Cooperative Leaders Alliance
120. Kitgum Village Enterprise Initiative
121. Gulu Inclusive Business Development NGO
122. Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative (ARLPI)
123. Jamii ya Kupatanisha (JYAK)
124. Gulu Human Rights Watch Group
125. Lamwo Transitional Justice Association
126. Pader Post-Conflict Justice Network
127. Kitgum Community Mediation Board
128. Acholi Peace and Justice Advocacy Forum
129. Agago Gender and Justice Center
130. Gulu Local Democracy Alliance
131. Pader Conflict Transformation Platform
132. Acholi Civic Education and Engagement Hub
133. Gulu Women's Rights Defenders Network
134. Lamwo Peace and Security Dialogue Group
135. Kitgum Youth Mediation Circle
136. Acholi Truth and Reconciliation Council
137. Gulu Citizen Voice Initiative
138. Agago Rights and Legal Aid Center
139. Kitgum Peace and Stability Watch
140. Lamwo Community Legal Advocacy Forum
141. Pader Women's Justice Initiative

142. Gulu Anti-Corruption Youth Watch
143. Acholi Rights and Governance Coalition
144. Kitgum Democratic Engagement Forum
145. Lamwo Gender Justice Alliance
146. Gulu Paralegal Services CBO
147. Acholi Transitional Justice Hub
148. Lamwo Civic Response to Conflict
149. Gulu Freedom and Justice Association
150. Kitgum Legal Literacy for All Network
151. Acholi Women's Mediation Forum
152. Gulu Peace Clubs in Schools Network
153. Agago Human Rights & Transparency Watch
154. Lamwo Youth Political Awareness Forum
155. Gulu Refugee Justice Advocacy Program
156. Kitgum Interfaith Dialogue Network
157. Pader Rule of Law Education Initiative
158. Acholi Grassroots Democracy Platform
159. Gulu Regional Human Rights Education Centre
160. Acholi Agroecology Alliance
161. Gulu Tree Planting & Reforestation NGO
162. Lamwo Natural Resources Protection Association
163. Agago Organic Farming Advocates
164. Gulu Climate Resilience and Advocacy Group
165. Pader Green Innovation Initiative
166. Acholi Sustainable Land Management Trust
167. Kitgum Forest Conservation Volunteers
168. Lamwo Water Catchment Protection Network
169. Gulu Waste Recycling Youth Network
170. Pader Community Climate Education Center
171. Agago Farmer Climate Awareness CBO
172. Lamwo Biodiversity Conservation Forum
173. Kitgum Eco-Tourism and Wildlife Society
174. Gulu Urban Greening and Farming Project
175. Acholi Green Youth Champions Network
176. Lamwo Clean Energy and Solar Advocacy
177. Kitgum Livestock and Pasture Forum
178. Pader Farmers and Environment Dialogue Group
179. Lamwo Agroforestry Education Society
180. Acholi Environmental Watch Group
181. Gulu Environmental Justice Platform
182. Acholi Rainwater Harvesting and Irrigation NGO
183. Uganda Landmine Survivors Association (ULSA)
184. Gulu Disability Empowerment Network
185. Pader Widows and Orphans Support Group
186. Acholi Elderly Care and Welfare CBO
187. Gulu Women Living with HIV Support Network
188. Kitgum Single Mothers Economic Upliftment
189. Acholi War Survivors Welfare Union
190. Lamwo Children with Special Needs NGO
191. Gulu Psycho-Social Support Alliance

192. Kitgum Gender-Based Violence Survivors Group
193. Agago Young Mothers Transformation Group
194. Acholi Social Safety & Welfare Foundation
195. Lamwo Rural Widow Support Network
196. Acholi Persons with Albinism Forum
197. Gulu Children with Disabilities Trust
198. Agago Special Needs Education Network
199. Gulu Inclusive Welfare & Equity NGO
200. Northern Uganda Social Protection Watch