

Rethinking participation in monitoring and evaluation. Beneficiaries' perspectives from the Local Enterprises and Skills Development Programme (LESDEP) in Ghana.

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Abstract: The buzz phrase in recent development policy discourse is participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E). The notion is that, participatory approaches present opportunities for attaining the desired policy outcomes, by curbing the problem of exclusion. This paper assesses the beneficiaries' perspectives of the participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E) process in the Local Enterprise and Skills Development Programme (LESDEP), Greater Accra Region, Ghana. A total of 120 respondents (project beneficiaries) were randomly selected for questionnaire administration, and in-depth interviews were conducted. This is in addition to the use of Participation Perception Index (PPI), developed to assess beneficiaries (who are the youth) perception of the extent to which they were involved in the PM&E. The study found that the LESDEP participatory approach is not entirely participatory. Secondly, the youth had no monitoring and evaluation skills or know-how as the project initiators failed to assist the youth to develop these. Furthermore, PM&E was not well integrated, as it was seen as separate, thus officials indicated that the primary objective of the implementing agency is to secure the youth (beneficiaries) job rather than involving them in the project PM&E. The study concluded that the end goal of the youth intervention programme is tied into the ideas of project sustainability which can be achieved when the various stakeholders are all on board in the PM&E.

Keywords: Participation, Youth, Stakeholders, Evaluation, Monitoring

Introduction and Background

The axiom in most social intervention programmes in recent times is participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E). However, in many programmes monitoring and evaluation (M&E) has been reduced to a compliance activity, with a strong external focus (being predominately executed by donors, partners or government agencies) with little or no involvement of beneficiaries of the programme (Williams 2004: 558). Thus, primary stakeholders of such projects are either left out or have a very minimal voice when it comes to the monitoring and evaluation, despite the fact that their input to programme performance is vital. This has highlighted the need for participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E) to improve performance.

Participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E) seeks to enhance project effectiveness through a bottom-up approach, with enormous prominence on participatory approach, either at the individual, group or community level. PM&E gives any programme, a people (beneficiary) focused orientation and integrates ideas of recipients into the various programme activities such as planning, decision-making processes, monitoring and evaluation. This is against the backdrop that true participatory approach in development projects should entail proper redistribution of power among various stakeholders including young people because a lack of it will ultimately leave the powerless no voice to influence the processes, own it as well as contribute to the outcome of the project (Arnstein, 1967; Hart, 1992; Ackermann et al. 2000; Auriat, Miljeteig, and Chawla, 2001; Cahill, 2007; CIDA, 2011; Chawla, 2002; ChildFund Australia, 2011; DFID 2010; Harper and Jones, 2009; Landsdown, 2001, Masters, Z. Macintosh, A. and Smith, E. 2004; Shier, 2001; Panda, 2007; Tisdall, 2008).

In reality (and at best), beneficiary participation has been limited. Limited or non-participation has been described by some scholars as “tokenism” and “manipulation” (Arnstein, 1967; Hart, 1992; World Bank et al, 2014; Chitukutuku, 2014). Arnstein argues, “[w]hen participation is restricted to these levels, there is no follow-through, no „muscle, hence no assurance of changing the status quo” (Arnstein, 1967: 2). Youth have been neglected in numerous development programmes (local and global) but Zeldin McDaniel, Topitzes, & Calvert, (2000:83) argued that when given the chance to participate meaningfully in any development project, the youth can bring in their unique contribution to ensure project effectiveness (Zeldin, McDaniel, Topitzes, & Calvert, 2000: 83).

In the past two decades, Ghana have initiated and implemented a good number of national policies and strategies that are youth-centred such as the National Youth Employment Programme (NYEP) currently known as the Ghana Youth Employment and Entrepreneurial Development Agency (GYEEDA) Gyampo&Obeng-Odoom 2013: 38). With increasing numbers of youth not assimilated into productive work, it is important to interrogate the performance of programmes, but, more specifically, determine the extent to which the programme beneficiaries, like the youth are involved in shaping their own programmes and ultimately their futures.

The Concept PM&E: A Historical Overview

Participatory monitoring and evaluation have gained some impetus in recent literature (Maguire, 1987; Jackson, 1999; Guijt, Arevalo and Saladores, 1998; Estrella, 2000; May, 2003; Chambers, 1997; Pasudel, 2009) although scholars have argued the concept itself is not recent (Estrella, 2000:3). PM&E was propounded from other participatory research models such as participatory action research (PAR), participatory learning and action or Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) by Chambers (1997) and farming systems research (FSR) or farming participatory research (FPR) drawing from the work of Amanor (1990) and others.

Estrella (2000:3) maintained that the PM&E is not new because there is documentary evidence that point to the fact that, PM&E started in the early 1970s. Howes (1992) cited in Estrella (2000:3) pointed out some of the early practice of Participatory M&E by citing a 1970s Oxfam sponsored project and Feuersteins (1986) work with rural women in Honduras. The approach has been applied in the different field of studies, it is therefore not surprising that PM&E has been viewed and interpreted in different cycles of development and its definitions are abound (Guijt 2014:1). A cursory look at the participatory monitoring and evaluation literature revealed that there is no single definition of the concept PM&E, rather there is a huge range of interpretation because PM&E means different things to the numerous field of studies (Estrella, 2000:5).

Some Definition of Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PM&E)

The critical question is what exactly is PM&E? The World Bank (2010) defines participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E) as “a process through which stakeholders at various levels engage in monitoring or evaluating a particular project, program or policy, share control over the content, the process and the results of the

monitoring and evaluation (M&E) activity and engage in taking or identifying corrective actions; PM&E focuses on the active engagement of primary stakeholders" (The World Bank, 2010:1). Jackson and Kassam (1989) defined participatory evaluation as "a process of self-assessment, collective knowledge production, and cooperative action in which the stakeholders in development interventions participate substantively in the identification of the evaluation issues, the design of the evaluation, the collection and analysis of data, and the action taken as a result of the evaluation findings. By participating in this process, the stakeholders also build their own capacity and skills to undertake research and evaluation in other areas and to promote other forms of participatory development. PM&E seeks to give preferential treatment to the voices and decisions of the least powerful and most affected stakeholders 'the local beneficiaries of the intervention'" (Jackson and Kassam, 1989:1). The primary participants in any participatory M &E activity include: the beneficiaries of the project, consisting of both genders at the local level; intermediary organizations, which serve as liaison entity between the community and donors or government as well as officials from the donor institution or government at all times (Rietbergen-McCracken et al, 1998: 5).

The Puzzle of participatory, monitoring and evaluation (PM&E)

Participatory approach in intervention projects tends to increase equality because it gives the local actors some meaningful opportunities to greatly participate in the project, although the equal opportunity tends to be modest (Henkel & Stirrat, 2001; Finsterbusch and Van Wicklin, 1989). However, critics like Uma Kothari echoing Henkel and Stirrat's argument opine that, the integration of individuals into the development process through participatory approaches in itself serve as an act of disempowering them "to challenge the prevailing hierarchies and inequalities in society" (Kothari, 2001: 143). The author revealed the 'tyranny of participation' in such development interventions and pointed out that "the very act of inclusion, of being drawn in as a participant" (Kothari, 2001: 142) have already disempowered them. How so? Parfitt has noted that while it may appear to integrate local people in such kind of interventions, contrary to this assumption is that "[t]he role of those mobilized to participate will simply be to rally around to work for the predetermined goals of the project, power-relations remain traditionally top-down" (Parfitt, 2004:540). While this view cannot be ignored, this can be

challenged when the beneficiaries of a programme do not only conform but play an important role in envisioning what the outcomes, outputs, plans and activities of the programme. In other words, they are not "window dressing" but are active and influential throughout the processes.

The substance of modern PM&E approaches espoused by donors, organizations and government is not so different from the conventional M&E approaches because the ultimate focus of both is measuring change, however the tenets that make PM&E somewhat different from the conventional one is its conceptualization of how to measure change, who is involved, and for what purposes (Estrella, 2000:4). However, in an attempt to maintain 'objectivity' on the part of project initiator, experts from outside are mostly given the nod in the conventional PM&E to conduct the evaluation (Estrella, 2000; Adams & Garbutt 2008). "The main difference is that in a participatory approach, stakeholders who are directly or indirectly involved, take part in selecting the indicators to measure changes, in collecting information, and in evaluation findings" (Estrella, 2000: 6). Korten and Klauss (1984) noted that the idea espoused by these international organization was born out because 'real development' must be 'people- centered' and not 'production-oriented' whereas others opined that proper development should have beneficiary participation as an integral component.

To buttress their argument on the involvement of beneficiary and project effectiveness, Finsterbusch and Van Wicklin (1989) outlined the five contextual factors to include: First, the level of development of the country or community. The authors stated that participatory approach tends to have no major impact in less developed communities or countries because in such countries the approach is less effective and the majority of the economically excluded population have no power to influence and capacity to participate in the first place. Second, the skills level of project recipients. Development projects that have a lot more skilled beneficiaries who can negotiate well because of their skills, influence and can control resources, tend to benefit the most if the approach is participatory. This produces a large opportunity on youth programmes for Ghana is particular and Africa as a whole, with large numbers of school leavers.

Third, they argued that beneficiaries can be proficient in terms of the project output if their level of technological know-how is high. Especially if the project is technologically inclined or otherwise a relatively simple technology can also increase beneficiaries'

effectiveness if they are not so technologically savvy. Fourth, they opined that the extent to which the beneficiaries are organized can also help increase their contribution to the project and for that matter the outcome of such development initiative. Lastly, the size of the development project in question can also determine the participant's involvement and benefits. National projects which tend to be huge in nature limit beneficiaries' access and thus, may fail to benefit most. However, beneficiaries' access projects that are relatively smaller, and it tends to be more beneficial due to their increased participation.

In the words of the Guijt (2014: 2) "the underlying rationale for choosing a participatory approach to impact evaluation can be either pragmatic or ethical, or a combination of the two". Pragmatic because better evaluations are achieved (i.e., better data, better understanding of the data, more appropriate recommendations, better uptake of findings); ethical because it is the right thing to do (i.e., people have a right to be involved in informing decisions that will directly or indirectly affect them"

Contextualisation of Youth driven agenda and Programmes in Ghana: A historical overview.

Youth participation in development initiatives is as old as Ghana's political history. The colonial imperialist for ages deliberately ignored the youth because of their vociferous demands and resorted to the indirect system of administration which gave credence to the traditional leaders rather than the youth at the time. However, the Ghanaian youth who were mobilized by the political elite were recognized by the government as a result of their role towards independence. The youth became major players in policy making and implementation (Boahen, 1979:171). Famous among these youth initiatives were the Young Pioneers and National Workers Brigade, which were established to curb the unemployment problem among the young people in Ghana (Goody, 1968; Chazan, 1974; Hodge, 1968). The regime involvement of youth was to engross them in the national development, reduce unemployment and encourage them to develop their skills to venture into other development areas in the economy (Shillington, 1992:6).

In the post 1966 era, the military administration that ousted the first civilian regime disbanded all the youth-centred initiatives (1966-1969). However, the second republic saw a major step forward when the government established the National Service Scheme (NSS), to address the economic deprivation among the youth at the time (Chazan, 1974:198). The initiative failed to bear any fruit

since the administration was prematurely ousted by another military coup d'état and in its place "Operation Feed Yourself" was established. The purpose was to involve all the citizenry in agriculture. These national agricultural policies were also driven on the shoulders of the youth with the aim of improving food production to attain food security in Ghana (Hansen, 1989:205).

The second republic was also toppled in 1979 with support from the National Union of Ghana Students (NUGS), a student youth association and other youth groups in Ghana at the time. Having handed over to a civilian administration (third republic), in September 1979, the government only lasted for 14 months. The NUGS again backed the military because of the administration failure to curb the economic hardships among the youth at the time (Boahen, 1992:126). From the first republic, 1960 to the fourth republic, 1992, there have been numerous youth interventions programmes in between and still counting.

The fourth republic has seen a lot of these youth initiatives. Despite many youth development initiatives, the average Ghanaian youth still experiences considerable economic pressures. The standard around which youth policy agenda is framed is the National Youth Policy (NYP), promulgated in the year 2010. The initiative provides a well-grounded framework with delineated pathways for youth participation in national development agenda. In Section 5.1 of the policy, reads; "an empowered youth contributing positively to national development." (NYP, 2010:1). However, many of these policies have very little to do with youth empowerment in practice and have become mere rhetoric. There seems to be little or no evidence on the part of government or civil society organization in trying to enforce the policy implementation.

The Local Enterprises and skills Development Programme (LESDEP) operated in all the ten different regions of Ghana. Having launched the initiative in October 2010, with an objective to train the unemployed youth in Ghana to acquire employable skills in their localities, LESDEP is gradually tumbling into what has become of many youth-centred initiatives in Ghana. LESDEP is a public-private partnership (PPP), which focus on youth enterprise and skills development under the auspices of some relevant government agencies and ministries. The initiative is predominantly centered on vocational training, skill development, empowerment, human resource and rural development.

The programme core objective is to create and facilitate the acquisition of technical, entrepreneurial and other specialized skills

that can help the project beneficiaries (youth) to establish their own businesses, manage them and ensure their sustainability (LESDEP, 2016). After their training or acquisition of skills, LESDEP provides start-up equipment, funds, and post-set-up support services to ensure that beneficiaries remain in the market. LESDEP was initially touted to be a decentralized poverty reduction initiative under the ambit of the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development.

The LESDEP is anchored under the Ghana Youth Employment and Entrepreneurial Development Agency (GYEEDA). The programme expectation was that the various districts in Ghana will take up the initiative and make it locally driven in order to tackle local-specific employment challenges among the youth with special reference to the Medium Term Development Plans (MTDPs) (GoG, 2014). The programme partners with the Ministry of Local Government & Rural Development and is overseen by the LESDEP secretariat. It also operates in collaboration with other ministries and agencies for the smooth running of all the fifteen modules. These modules include a range of trades including; electricians, mobile phone repairers, local garment or fashion designers, beauty care providers, event organizing or decorators, beads making crafters, window or sliding door designers, drivers, caterers, fish farmers, agro-processors, welders or fabricators, agricultural farmers, photographers and construction workers. The programme claims to have offices in 170 Metropolitan, Municipal District Assemblies (MMDAs) in Ghana.

Design and Methodology

To unpack the complexities regarding beneficiaries' perception of participation, the study used the mixed-methods approach. A questionnaire survey was administered out to beneficiaries while relevant stakeholders were also interviewed. In a case study approach, three districts were randomly selected from the sixteen districts in the Greater Accra region, Ghana. In total, 120 beneficiaries were interviewed and at least one official from each district as the key informant. The study adopted different sampling techniques to select samples out of the population for the semi-structured interviews and questionnaire administration. Regarding the latter, a simple random sampling was used to select respondents sampled out of 500 population while a purposive sampling technique was utilized to select respondents for the semi-structured interviews. Utilizing thematic and content techniques, the qualitative data was analysed whereas a Participation Perception

Index (PPI), was developed to assess the youth perception of the existing PM&E. Using the dual research design and indicators, this paper assesses beneficiaries' perspective of the participatory monitoring and evaluation (P&ME) processes of the Local Enterprise and Skills Development Programme (LESDEP), Ghana.

The Level of Youth (Beneficiaries) Participation in the PM&E

The extent in which the various stakeholders are involved in the PM&E can better explain how effective the existing PM&E process activities are. The researchers used questionnaires to ascertain the youth level of involvement in the LESDEP participatory monitoring and evaluation; from the PM&E formulation to the decision making and execution. The finding is in the table below.

Table 1
Youth (beneficiaries) Level of Involvement

PM&E Activities	Very Involved	Involved	Somewhat Involved	Not involved	Not at all Involved	Total
Initial design of PM&E	-	3(2.5%)	14 (11.7%)	21 (17.5%)	82 (68.3%)	120 (100%)
Outcomes choosing for PM&E	2 (1.7%)	2(1.7%)	17 (14.1%)	24 (20.0%)	75(62.5%)	120(100%)
Selection of indicators for PM&E	2 (1.7%)	5 (4.2%)	12 (10%)	22 (18.3%)	79(65.8%)	120(100%)
Data collection for PM&E	65 (54.1%)	44(36.7%)	-	8 (6.7%)	3(2.5%)	120(100%)
Data analysis for PM&E	-	-	-	44 (36.7%)	76(63.3%)	120(100%)
Determination of findings from PM&E	-	4 (3.3%)	8 (6.7%)	36 (30.0%)	72(60.0%)	120(100%)
Decisions taken after PM&E findings	-	2(1.7%)	9 (7.5%)	22 (18.3%)	87(72.5%)	120(100%)

Source: Boadu 2016

Beneficiary responses with regards to the youth involvement in the designing of the PM&E, showed that a large proportion (68.3%) of the beneficiaries posited they were not involved at all while 17.5% opined that they were not involve in the PM&E design. This amounts to 85.8% of the youth, who were not involved in any activity related to the formulation of the PM&E framework. Only 2.5% of the youth stressed that they were involved in the designing of the PM&E while 11.7% said they were somewhat involved.

Responses from officials does somewhat contradict the findings as noted below, as it appears that the processes were predesigned for the youth to participate and thus, the officials felt there was some engagement, however, such engagement opportunities may have been for endorsement or compliance reasons. As the data suggests that, the beneficiaries did not take ownership and were not actively involved in the formulation stages of the processes.

... they saw for most part all the processes going on ... We are very focused in terms of ensuring that we give the youth plenty of opportunities to engage and to be actively involved in the initiative, and ones they see it as theirs they will be willing to work to sustained it. [R1 LESDEP Staff, November 9, 2016].

Evidently, the findings from the study also show that majority of the beneficiaries were not part of distilling the outcomes. And this is a serious challenge as the outcomes speak to benefits that accrue directly to the beneficiaries. With only about 21% having had some engagement at outcomes distilling stage and only 19% involved at the determination of indicators, this already puts the participatory nature of the programme in question.

The PM&E activity which received a positive response from the youth (beneficiaries) was data collection. A greater proportion of the youth (90.8%) perceived that they were fully involved in the data gathering activities (very involved and involved). About 9.2% were not at all involved in the data gathering activities.

However, the finding reveals that all (100%) of the youth were not involve in the analysis of the data collected from the field (not involved and not at all involved). With respect to the determination of findings from the PM&E and the decision taking after the PM&E processes, the responses were fairly the same. About 90% and 90.8% of the beneficiaries perceived that they were not involved in both processes respectively ('not involved' and 'not at all involved').

...we have field officer that go around to engage them in their work progress among many others, consultations and that's the feedback we receive from the beneficiaries... and they serve as respondent ... [R1 LESDEP Staff, November 9, 2016].

The quote above from the interview conducted supports the findings from the field concerning the beneficiaries' involvement in the data collection for PM&E. The statement lends credence to the youth serving as just respondents in the PM&E.

The youth exclusion from the designing of the existing PM&E, the selection of indicators to be used, data analysis, and decision

making after the PM&E are all consistent with the findings of the interviews conducted. Involving beneficiaries in only data gathering or collection stage of the PM&E process activities cannot constitute a comprehensive participatory approach. Consequently, inferences from the above findings, it can be argued that the scope of the existing PM&E activities are limited, hence the PM&E processes were not completely participatory.

Analysis of Beneficiaries Perspective on LEADEP Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PM&E)

The youth perceived participation in the existing PM&E was measured using a scale proposed by Likert (1932: 14). Each question includes five-point Likert data where the respondents choose a response category; 'strongly agree (SA),' 'agree (A),' 'somewhat agree (SA),' 'disagree (D), and strongly disagree (SD)' which were respectively assigned a weight value of 1,2,3,4 and 5 as presented in Table 2. This was to reflect the extent at which each beneficiary (youth) were involved in the PM&E using the nine statement on a five-point Likert scale about the object. There exists extensive literature on the usage of diverse index measures in research (for review see for instance; the Economic Security Index (ESI) by Hacker et al. (2013:6); UNDP's Human Development Index (HDI) (UNDP, 2016:196-200), Gender Inequality Index (GII) (UNDP, 2016:52) and Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) by Transparency International (2015:3). Petty, Brewer, and Brown, 2005:63) also put forward an index to measure job satisfaction among employees, while satisfaction index have also been developed to measure apartment residents' satisfaction in Korea (Yim, Lee, Kim, and Kim, 2009:3)

In that regards, this study, developed Participation Perception Index (PPI) to assess beneficiaries' participation in the existing PM&E process. The PPI, however, was computed by first allocating values from 1 to 5 to the ordinal responses (Likert's scale responses) of the youth (beneficiaries), with a lower value indicating stronger agreement to the statement that make up a particular variable. The total weight value for each of the variables (SWV) was also computed by adding the number of responses for each rating to a variable and the respective weight value together. The Participation Perception Index (PPI) was developed to ascertain beneficiaries perceived level of involvement in the existing PM&E processes in general.

The sum of the total weight value (SWV) as well as the participation perception index (PPI) are presented inTable 2.Using the five-

point Likert scale with respect to the weight values assigned to each of the statement, the closer the PPI is to one, the higher the participation in the PM&E. Evidence from the field study revealed that the youth perceptions of the level of their participation in the PM&E was not encouraging. The overall perception of their involvement in the existing PM&E processes was way below average. The general level of the participation perception measure is 3.50, a figure that is higher than 'somewhat agree' with a rated value of '3' [see table 2].

... beneficiaries engagement I guess is one of the primary tool to achieve all of that, progress, impact and outcome of the initiatives but of course in various ways and in different stages, ... because you are engaging from the start, we want to understand the socio-economic status of these beneficiaries we are taking in the first place, and it all about monitoring, take their particular to be able to track them once they are done with the training ... We want to build relationships as we go so if you know ... all about them the best it is. We are interested in investing time and energy in actually getting to know the beneficiaries, the type of apprenticeship job they are interested in, how we can fit that into our limited number of modules. ... [R2 LESDEP Staff, November 9, 2016].

The above statement is an indication that the project managers were interested in engaging beneficiaries, getting to know their apprenticeship job preference and to ascertain if they are capable to pay the set-up capital without integration with PM&E processes.

Table 2
Distribution of Respondents by perceived level of Participation

Participation Indicators	Rating with weight Values						PPI
	SA(1)	A(2)	NS(3)	D(4)	SD(5)	SWV	
Is it truth that:							
The youth participated in the decision making regarding the PM& E?	1	3	12	67	37	496	4.13
Youth participate in the implementation stage of the initiative?	1	17	14	53	35	464	3.90
Youth are members of monitoring and evaluation committees?	1	1	14	52	36	432	3.60
Youth have active roles in the PM& E processes?	1	3	12	64	40	499	4.16
The youth are just consulted when the need requires?	33	65	6	15	1	246	2.05
The involvement of the youth is valued by the project implementers?	1	4	27	81	7	449	3.74
There are mechanism to help the youth participate in the PM&E processes actively?	2	2	20	77	19	469	3.91
The youth participate in meetings/ workshops concerning the PM&E progress?	1	3	15	76	25	481	4.01
The involvement of the beneficiaries will serves as youth empowerment?	41	44	33	1	1	237	1.98
Total							31.48

Source: Boadu 2016

The programme pitfalls, benefits as well as a sustainable partnership among the various stakeholders can be brought to light if participatory monitoring and evaluation is conducted properly. One key focus is to develop the individuals or teams' skills, abilities and capacities to walk all the needed steps in any participatory monitoring and evaluation process but unfortunately, the beneficiaries in the case of LESDEP were not integrated into these processes.

The synergy among the stakeholders is paramount but unfortunately, the LESDEP programme failed to integrate the youth (beneficiaries) in the existing so-called progress and impact monitoring and evaluation of the initiative. Rossman (2000:1) argues that all the processes involve from start to the end of the PM&E must be seen to be harnessing the various viewpoints of all the stakeholders, whether they are dormant or powerful, beneficiaries or funders and implementers or evaluators of the

project. Contrary to this knowledge, in the case study project, the primary stakeholder (youth) only participated in the data collection stage for PM&E.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The key challenges to participatory monitoring and evaluation can be considered on three different levels; those that are embedded within the approach itself, donor requirements which tend to limit the involvement of some stakeholders, the willingness or otherwise of the project beneficiaries to partake in the processes. The project design stage demands the involvement of the various stakeholders. It should intent to develop the recipients of the projects and not development agency itself. The numerous youth intervention programmes in Ghana are heavily reliant on government funding and LESDEP is no exception. Initiators tend to limit the role of recipients in any other activities that will surge the cost. Unfortunately, this has increasingly made it difficult for an equally important process such as participatory monitoring and evaluation.

The above study findings have demonstrated that youth in PM&E plays a critical role in enhancing participation, empowerment, accountability, decision-making, capacity building and above all the sustainability of the intervention project. In spite of the constraints that confront the youth in their effective inclusion in the PM&E, the study revealed that their involvement will tend to have a positive effect on their well-being as project beneficiaries. It was also evident that beneficiaries (youth) were made to serve as mere respondents during data collection for PM&E. The youth had no opportunity to participate fully in all the PM&E processes. The scope of stakeholders' participation limited them from greatly influence any of the decision taken regarding the existing PM&E framework. Nonetheless, there were still enormous constraints facing the youth as well as project initiators in the current PM&E.

With regards to the findings and insights generated from the study, the following are recommended for programme managers in youth-centred intervention project. First: Unless efforts are made on the part of programme managers to enable beneficiaries (youth) participate actively in the PM&E process activities (involve in the: PM&E design, selection of indicators for evaluation, data collection, analysis of data, determining of findings for the evaluation, decision taken after the findings) the assertion of involvement made on behalf of programme recipient in participatory monitoring and evaluation will therefore seem rather futile.

Second: Project managers, as well as donors or funders of development intervention initiatives that are youth-centred, must endeavour to embrace active participation of youth. In instances where beneficiaries have no skills or PM&E knowledge, they must be trained to enable them to participate in the processes. Their involvement can lead to seeing the intervention programme as one that belongs to them, thus the project sustainability. The youth who are primary stakeholders in the project must constantly be consulted (must be in the known) in all the project decisions that can directly affect their well-being. The various stakeholder associations, especially the beneficiaries' associations must actively demand their involvement in the entire stages of the PME process activities so they can control and influence the final decision making with their eyes fixed on the benefits they can derive from process.

Third: Besides, it is essential that project managers recognize beneficiaries as partners and not desperately job seeking recipients. Young-adult collaboration in the PM&E must be strengthened (Young-Adult Monitoring and Evaluation, Y-AM&E). Evidently, the study pointed out that youth have no skills to enable them to participate fully in the PM&E activities. Beneficiaries must acquire new PM&E skills and knowledge as well as master the techniques. This can be done through young-adult collaboration; thus it must be promoted by the youth as well as the project implementing agency. Furthermore, the implementing agency, as well as donors, must set aside financial capital for their project PM&E. It is beneficial that donors, government or project initiators spend some amount of money to ensure effective monitoring and evaluation which is embedded in participatory approach.

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