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MA IN PROJECT MANAGEMENT

**Factors Affecting Successful Implementation of Projects
in International Nongovernmental Organizations in
Ethiopia: The case of Save the Children International
Projects**

BY:

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for Obtaining the Degree of Masters of Project Management**

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Declaration

I hereby declare that the study which is being presented in this thesis entitled “**Factors Affecting Successful Implementation of Projects in International Nongovernmental Organizations in Ethiopia: The case of Save the Children International Projects**” is original work of my own. It had not been presented for a partial fulfillment for any educational qualification at this university or any other and in any projects by any means, and all the resources materials used for this thesis had been accordingly acknowledged.

Blen Damtew

Date

Declaration

I hereby declare that the study which is being presented in this thesis entitled “**Factors Affecting Successful Implementation of Projects in International Nongovernmental Organizations in Ethiopia: The case of Save the Children International Projects**”. It is conducted by Blen Damtew for the partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of master’s degree in **Project Management**. To the best of my knowledge it is original work carried by her, it had not been presented for a partial fulfillment for any educational qualification at this university or any other and in any projects by any means.

Wubshet Bekalu (PhD)

Date

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ACRONYMS

EC	European Commission
DFID	Department for International Development
INGOs	International Nongovernmental Organizations
NGOs	Nongovernmental Organizations
PMBOK	Project Management Body of Knowledge
SCI	Save the Children International
UNs	United Nations
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development

Abstract

Save the Children is one of the international non-governmental organization which works with a big ambition to achieve a world in which every child attains the right to survival, protection, development and participation. The purpose of this study is to establish factors affecting successful implementation of projects in international NGO's in Ethiopia. The case of Save the Children International projects in Ethiopia. To achieve this objective, the study is guided by the following specific research objectives: finding out how lack of effective planning affects the implementation of SCI Projects in Ethiopia; to establish the effects of clarity on complex internal and external rules on the effective implementation of SCI Projects in Ethiopia; to establish the influence of communication on the effective implementation of SCI Projects in Ethiopia; and to establish the extent to which managerial factors affects the implementation of SCI Projects in Ethiopia. This study was limited to one non-governmental organization - SCI. This study adopts a descriptive research design. Descriptive research design has been chosen because this study seeks to determine factors affecting successful implementation of projects in SCI in Ethiopia. The target population of this study included direct project staffs of SCI working specifically in the projects being implemented in Ethiopia. Questionnaires were used to collect data. It had both open ended and close ended questions. Both hard copies and email communication were issued for the target population. The collected data is analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative data analysis methods. Quantitative method involved descriptive analysis. Descriptive analysis such as frequencies and percentages is used to present quantitative data in the form of tables and graphs. All the respondents indicated that lack of effective planning and clarity on complex internal and external rules affects successful project implementation at SCI. The results also indicated that communication and managerial factors affects implementation of projects at SCI. The study recommends that to effectively implement donor projects SCI work plan must be clear to the project employees and procedures should be in place to discuss the requirements of the project before starting to implement, communication should be effective, project managers should have hard and soft skills and clear communication and focus on strong induction in creating common understanding among the staffs on both donor and internal requirement at the beginning of the project is very crucial. Areas for further studies are also recommended.

Key words: Project Implementation, Planning, Effective Communication, Internal and External Rules and Managerial Factors

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

This chapter outlines background information on subject of research and covers statement of the problem, objectives of the research, hypothetical research questions, and significance of the study. The chapter also presents other sections including limitations, delimitations, the scope and organization of the study.

1.1 Background of the study

Organizations overall are continually involved in developing and attempting to implement new projects. Majority of the nongovernmental organizations are project based. It is very beneficial to understand the various factors during project implementation that determine a project success or failure in nongovernmental organizations.

The basic definition of a project, it is a temporary endeavor undertaken by people who work cooperatively together to create a unique product or service (Project Management Institute, 2000) within an established time frame and within established budget and scope to produce identifiable deliverables.

Project success has been defined by the criteria of time, budget and deliverables (Flaman and Gallagher, 2001). According to a research (Frese and Sauter, 2003) a project is only successful when there is good planning. This requires excellent forward planning, which includes detailed planning of the process implementation stages, task timeliness, fall-back positions, and re-planning. The researchers noted that, initial planning is not enough. Projects often take wrong turns, or initial solutions prove unfounded. The project manager is not prepared to re-plan or has not considered and planned fall-back positions when initial plans fail, will often find that the project first stalls, and then finally fails. We must remember that project management is not a straight-line process, it requires rethinking which goes with the changing environment.

According to an article (Alexander, 2015) determining the scope of a project is difficult without spending a considerable amount of upfront time properly planning. Gathering requirements, developing comprehensive project management plans, and determining and scheduling activities among other things, require considerable thought, coordination and a lot of time. Without proper planning, key project elements can lead to lack of stakeholder commitment and resources because poor planning does not encourage confidence or credibility. This will result in the potential to discourage stakeholder engagement with the project. Those powerful project leaders boost confidence by keeping project planning activities and therefore, remove the need for costly, time-consuming rework and increase success ratios throughout projects company wide.

There are conditions or terms imposed by most donors that must be followed in projects that they finance or sponsor. When donor attaches so many conditions on the project agreement, the disbursement of funds for the projects clients may end up being delayed and it can culminate into cost overrun of the project or the project stalling or abandoned by the funder. It can also extend

the project completion time. In addition to this policy reforms made by government, does also have an impact on donor funded projects and it makes the implementation of the project more complex or difficult.

According to the research conducted by (Ofunaya, 2013) the extent of success of donor funded projects is determined by both technical and managerial capacity of the human resources of the implementing agencies. In addition, appropriate supportive infrastructure is a necessity. It further noted that, projects fail too often because the project scope was not fully appreciated and/or user needs not fully understood. According to the research results (Robert and Dr. Vicki, 2003), found that “there are areas that should be emphasized by project managers who are committed to the success of their projects.” According to their findings the three variables that leads to success of the project are good planning, clear responsibility and accountability, and schedule control. In their study, they further noted that there are top five factors found in successful projects are: user involvement, executive management support, clear statement of requirements, proper planning and realistic expectations. Their report concludes that these were the elements that were most often pointed to as major contributors to project success. In the same study they listed out other factors that foreshadowed a failed project. They were: lack of efficient internal communication links, lack of responsive decision making, and lack of effective teamwork, incomplete requirements, lack of user involvement, lack of resources, unrealistic expectations, lake of executive support, changing requirements and specifications, lack of effective planning and technical illiteracy.

Business today is operating under high level of uncertainty, projects implementation are open to all sorts of external influence, unexpected events, ever growing requirements, changing constraints and fluctuating resource flows. This clearly shows that if projects are applied and steps are not taken in order to manage them effectively and efficiently, the chance of failure is high.

There are many things that lead to project success and many that lead to failure. Good project management is a process of continuous improvement. It is a process of making mistakes and learning from those mistakes. It is a process of continuous study and learning. For those who cannot devote themselves to this never-ending process, there will be few successes.

1.1.1 Save the Children Projects Overview

According to the information presented on the brochure organized by the communication and campaign department of the organization, Save the Children first worked in Ethiopia in the 1930's and set up its first formal office in 1984 famine. It delivers both humanitarian and emergency relief projects in different regions of Ethiopia. SCI implements emergency relief and long-term development programs. SCI programs support existing Government of Ethiopia delivery structures, allowing the organization to achieve scale with proven approaches. SCI focuses on programmatic areas like Health, HIV and AIDS, nutrition, food security and livelihoods, water, sanitation and hygiene, education, child protection, and child right governance. The organization annual average budget is more than 110 million dollars and the

fund is donated from different institutional donors like USAID, DFID, UN Agencies, EC/ECHO and other individual donors.

Save the Children International work with the Government of Ethiopia, with many local Non-Governmental Organizations and a broad range of partners. Apart from providing direct services, the organization work involves building the capacity of local partners and communities, advocacy, innovation, research and documentation.

Save the Children works in all regional states: Amhara, Tigray, Oromia, SNNPR, Benishangul-Gumuz, Somali, Gambela and Afar and in two administrative cities of Ethiopia. As well as the firm head office in Addis Ababa, the organization has 38 other offices across the country. Some of the projects being implemented in the listed regions includes: - The support to the Provision of basic services in the Somali Region of Ethiopia under the PDP” (BASES under PDP): Gates Advocacy Anchor Grant III 2018-20 Project, INSPIRE, Growth Trough Nutrition (GTN), Potential, NORAD, Migration Projects, Humanitarian projects and the like.

Save the Children programmatic approach is to build evidence from its program innovations and then work to enhance Government of Ethiopia systems to scale-up successful programs. The firm typically enhances service delivery directly or through local non-governmental organizations and other partners and uses its successes to engage in policy dialogue at different levels.

Working in partnerships is central to Save the Children's Theory of Change and the organization mission to inspire breakthroughs in the way the world treats children and achieve immediate and lasting change in their lives. Save the Children's Theory of Change states that: "We build partnerships: collaborate with children, civil society organizations, communities, governments and the private sector to share knowledge, influence others and build capacity to ensure children's well-being". Specifically, SCI partner with government at all levels, international and local nongovernmental organizations (Civil Societies), research and policy institutions, private sector and media.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Majority of nongovernmental organization projects are resourced by donor funding. It can be governments, institutional donors, private sectors and the process of accessing these is very competitive and so if the accountability mechanisms, that is delivery of outputs and activities and budget utilization are met there is possibility of either getting a rewards or sanctions by the funding entity. To remain in the game, the non-governmental organizations needs to deliver the project to the standard and to the satisfaction level of the donors and the implementing NGO should make sure that during implementation, the organization should follow standard rules and regulations. Most donors put a lot of pressure on the recipient countries on the projects that are financed by them. Not complying with this requirements and standards will result in the NGO's to become out of business.

Most NGO projects have done very well in delivery of outputs and activities - which basically is the core of project management - delivery within time, budgets and scope but weak at impact level to mean that the delivery of this project might not make any change in reversing poverty,

inequality, restoration on economic growth at macro level. The overall performance of a project is a key factor to ascertain the success of a project. This is usually determined by the attainment of the project objectives and the sustainability of the project thereafter.

A lot of research has partially addressed the factors that contribute to project failure in general. Much of the research has mainly focused on what causes delays on project implementation and cost overruns and fixed completion time. According to the study conducted by (Lavagnon A. Ika, 2012) he sets out four reasons why donor funded projects fail. These are lack of flexibility in the standard set by the funding agencies regardless of the size of the project, giving too many attentions on the standard/guidelines and giving less emphasis is given on the result of the project, lack of project management capacity and neglecting the cultural issues of the intervention areas. In other words, jumping in with charity funds to deliver a project doesn't result in strong local commitment to the project. These projects can be seen as being managed by outsiders, so there is little interest in them from the local community and they may not take local culture and sensitivities into account.

In order to react to both internal and external factors in a project environment of the Save the Children projects that affect successful implementation, it is necessary to investigate, identify and understand these factors and establish to what extent they individually or collectively contributed to the success or failure of the project implementation. This study therefore, sought to examine the factors affecting the successful implementation of project which is being implemented by Save the Children International in Ethiopia.

The study will also create an enabling road map to the achievement of the projects objectives and by providing relevant information that would help improve the implementation of the NGO projects.

1.3 Research Questions

To help meet the study objectives, the following overarching questions guided the study;

- I. To what extent does poor planning affect the implementation of Save the Children International Projects in Ethiopia?
- II. To what extent clarity on complex internal and external rules influence effective implementation of Save the Children International Projects in Ethiopia?
- III. To what extent communication influence on the effective implementation of Save the Children International Projects in Ethiopia?
- IV. To what extent managerial factors does affect the implementation of Save the Children International Projects in Ethiopia?

1.4 Objective of the Study

1.4.1 Broad Objective

The broad objective of this study was to determine factors affecting successful implementation of projects in international NGO's within Ethiopia – a case of Save the Children International projects in Ethiopia.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

This study was guided by the following specific research objectives

- a) To find out how lack of effective planning affects the implementation of Save the Children projects in Ethiopia
- b) To establish the influence of clarity on complex internal and external rules on the effective implementation of Save the Children International Projects in Ethiopia
- c) To establish the influence of communication on the effective implementation of Save the Children International Projects in Ethiopia
- d) To establish the extent to which managerial factors affects the implementation of Save the Children International Projects in Ethiopia

1.5 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the factors affecting successful implementation of Save the Children International projects in Ethiopia. The variables under this study includes poor planning, internal/external rules, communication and managerial factors.

1.6 Significance of the study

This study would be very beneficial to several stakeholders including Save the children International, other non-governmental organizations, donor agencies, project managers and project management students, future researchers and academicians.

For the management of Save the Children International, the findings of this study would be important in understanding of the factors affecting successful implementation of Save the Children International Projects in Ethiopia hence it will inform them on necessary alleviation strategies to handle on their effects. It will inform the organization future planning and strategy development as far as the operations of the NGO are concerned.

It will also help the various donors understand the various factors affecting successful implementation of projects in Ethiopia. The donors using the report will be able to know the various areas that they should address during the monitoring and evaluation of projects.

To future researchers and academicians, the study would be important in the suggestion of areas requiring further research to build on the topic of factors affecting project implementation of non-governmental projects.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

This study will be carried out on one international nongovernmental organization – Save the Children International in Ethiopia whose project is funded by donors. The findings out of this study might be generalized and might not apply to other international NGOs in Ethiopia because of the uniqueness of projects and the varied area of project implementation. A larger research would be more appropriate for generalization of the findings to the whole NGO sector in Ethiopia.

1.8 Scope of the Study

This study is limited to Save the Children International projects implemented in Ethiopia. Although SCI implements different big and small projects across the different regional states in Ethiopia, the study will focus only on Save the Children projects being implemented in Somalia, Oromia, Amhara and Afar regions. The research is confined to these specified regions, and whilst the conclusions will make an effort to generalize the findings to other NGO projects as well as on Save the Children projects being implemented in all regions.

1.9 Organization of the Study

This research project proposal is organized in five chapters. Chapter one covers the introduction of the study. It also illustrates the background of the study, the statement of the problem, objectives of the study and research questions, delimitation and scope of the study.

Chapter two contains literature review. It presents definition of projects and the different factors that led to success or failure of project implementation.

Chapter three contains the research methodology. The chapter outlines the research design, target population, sampling procedures, and data collection instruments. The chapter also explains how data will be analyzed.

Chapter four contains data analysis and presentations of results and finally the last chapter deal with summary of finding, the research conclusion and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction to Literature Review

The purpose of the chapter is to explore the past research studies on challenges in successful project implementation. It gives an insight into the literature by other scholars and researchers on the aspect of factors affecting successful implementation of projects in NGO's. The review is organized according to the specific objectives in order to ensure relevance to the research problem. It also provides the theoretical underpinnings of the study. The specific areas covered here are project planning, clarity on project donor rules and regulations, project communication and managerial factors. The conceptual framework detailing the independent variables and dependent variables is also presented.

2.2 Theoretical Literature

2.2.1 An overview of Projects, Project Management, Project Implementation and Project Successes

Project

A project, as defined by Wysocki, Beck and Crane (2000), is a sequence of unique, complex, and connected activities having one goal or purpose that must be completed by a specific time, within budget, and according to specification. This can be contrasted from a routine set of activities or daily operations which are intended to be continuous process without a planned end. Projects are also characterized by general attributes such as the purpose, life cycle, uniqueness, interdependencies and conflict (Meredith & Mantel Jr., 2000). Merna and Al-Thani (2008) also defined a project as a unique investment of resources to achieve specific objectives, such as the production of goods or services, in order to make a profit or to provide a service for a community. A project is an irreversible change with a life cycle and defined start and completion dates. A key characteristic of projects is the role played by a key actor aptly named as project manager. While the project manager is central to the process of project management, s/he is only as good as the project team s/he leads. Thus, it might be an underestimation to propound that the success or otherwise of a project depends solely on the project manager.

Project Management

To ensure the success of projects, the project manager must have the requisite knowledge of project management, which is defined as the planning, organization, monitoring and control of all aspects of a project and the motivation of all involved to achieve project objectives safely and within defined time, cost and performance (PMI, 1996). It is also the application of knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques to project activities to meet project requirements (PMI, 2008). In Pinkerton's (2003) view, project management harnesses the competencies of various individuals, grouping them together and enabling them to achieve the objectives of the project and ensure the success of the project. According to Kerzner, Project management is the planning, organizing,

directing, and controlling of company resources for a relatively short-term objective that has been established to complete specific goals and objectives (Kerzner H., 2003).

Project Implementation

Effective project implementation is looked at in many ways to include a large variety of criteria. However, in its simplest terms, effectiveness of project implementation can be thought of as incorporating four basic facets. A project is generally considered to be successfully implemented if it comes in on-schedule (time criterion), comes in on-budget (monetary criterion), achieves basically all the goals originally set for it (effectiveness criterion), and is accepted and used by the clients for whom the project was intended (client satisfaction criterion). By its basic definition, a project comprises a defined time frame to completion, a limited budget, and a specified set of performance characteristics. Further, the project is usually targeted for use by some client, either internal or external to the organization and its project team.

Project Success

Defining Project Success

According to the PMBOK Guide, since projects are temporary in nature, the success of the project should be measured in terms of completing the project within the constraints of scope, time, cost, quality, resources, and risk as approved between the project managers and senior management (PMBOK Guide). For a project to be successful, it is essential to understand the project requirements right from the start and go for project planning which provides the right direction to project managers and their teams and execute the project accordingly (Nader Sh. Kandelousi, Ooi. J., Abdollahi, 2011). A successful project is one that is delivered on time and managed within the budget.

The traditional view of project success is to accomplish all of the schedule, budget, and technical objectives as planned (Harvey A. Lev, 2002). Ideally a project will be considered totally successful if it gets completed on time, within budget and performs exactly to the designer's specifications (Harvey A. Lev, 2002). These three variables define the overall goals of a project; therefore, any project that is "on time, on budget, high quality" is declared a success. The difficulty, however, exists in their relationship to one another (Erik Versuh, 2003). The term equilibrium sums up the challenge: The quality of the product we create depends on the time and money we are willing to spend. After a balance between these variables is struck, a change to one will affect the other two. Achieving the proper balance of cost, schedule, and quality is beyond the control of the project manager alone. All stakeholders, particularly those involved in project selection, influence the choices and trade-offs that make up the triple constraint (Erik Versuh, 2003). Tradeoffs have to be accepted between various performance parameters for effective management of a project (Harvey A. Lev, 2002).

2.3 Factors Affecting Successful Implementation of Projects

Among the study conducted by (Sumner, 1999) failure to a project might come from poor communication among the beneficiaries and the project team members, inadequate financial resources, lack of motivation, poor project definition and project organization, environmental

conditions, poor planning, quality of project management, and infrastructure are some of the reasons why project fails.

Here under, this study presents literature relating to the factors affecting successful implementation of projects,

2.3.1 Lack of Good Planning

Planning, in general, can best be described as the function of selecting the enterprise objectives and establishing the policies, procedures, and programs necessary for achieving them. Planning in a project environment may be described as establishing a predetermined course of action within a forecasted environment. Project planning must be systematic, flexible enough to handle unique activities, disciplined through reviews and controls, and capable of accepting multifunctional inputs. Successful project managers realize that project planning is an iterative process and must be performed throughout the life of the project (Kerzner, 2013). Organizations should create an overall project work plan before the project starts. Before the project work begins, you must make sure that the work is properly understood and agreed to by the project sponsor and key stakeholders. You need to work with the sponsor and stakeholders to ensure that there is a common perception of what the project will deliver, when it will be complete, what it will cost, who will do the work, how the work will be done, and what the benefits will be. The larger the project, the more important it is that this information be mapped out formally and explicitly. All projects should start with this type of upfront planning to prevent problems caused by differing viewpoints on the basic terms of the project.

In addition, it is very helpful to have an agreed-on set of project management procedures that are used to manage the project. These include how you will manage scope, issues, risks, communication, the work plan, etc. Again, the key is to define these all up front to better manage expectations. For instance, if you define and get agreement on the procedure for approving scope change requests, you should have a much easier time managing change once the project begins.

One of the objectives of project planning is to completely define all work required (possibly through the development of a documented project plan) so that it will be readily identifiable to each project participant. This is a necessity in a project environment because: if the task is well understood prior to being performed, much of the work can be preplanned, if the task is not understood, then during the actual task execution more knowledge is gained that, in turn, leads to changes in resource allocations, schedules, and priorities and the more uncertain the task, the greater the amount of information that must be processed in order to ensure effective performance. Without proper planning, programs and projects can start off “behind the eight ball. Lack of proper planning produce uncertainty, affects efficiency of project operation and there will be lack of better understanding of project objectives by all project teams (Kerzner, 2013).

The first indicator, good planning, requires excellent forward planning, which includes detailed planning of the process implementation stages, task timeliness, fall-back positions, and re-planning. Notice that initial planning is not enough. Projects often take wrong turns, or initial solutions prove unfounded. The project manager who does not prepare to re-plan, or has not

considered and planned fall-back positions when initial plans fail, will often find that the project first stalls, and then fails. We must remember that project management is not a straight-line process, but an iterative process that requires agile rethinking as the known environment changes before our eyes.

Projects often involve a lot of detail and require the efforts of a lot of people to be coordinated. In such a situation work needs to be properly organized if effective progress is to be made. Where the level of organization is insufficient the project team can quickly lose control. Conversely, where the controls put in place are more than are needed (or inappropriate for the type of project being run) the project can be weighed down by unnecessary inefficiencies.

If you've ever attended an end-of-project meeting on a project that had major problems, chances are good that one of the major themes you heard is "we should have spent more time planning." Many project managers think that they need to jump right into the project by gathering business requirements. They think that if they do a good job with that, they're ready to run on the project. That is simply not true. In fact, you must complete a definition and planning process before you start gathering the business requirements.

2.3.1.1 How does poor project planning produce potential problems to successful project implementation?

Here under are some of the areas that needs effective up-front planning,

a. Cost, quality and time constraint issues and scope creep

Determining the scope of a project is difficult without spending a considerable amount of upfront time properly planning. Gathering requirements, developing comprehensive project management plans, and determining and scheduling activities among other things, require considerable thought, coordination and a lot of time.

Without planning activities, these key project elements can lead to lack of stakeholder commitment and resources because poor planning does not instill confidence or credibility. In turn, this has the potential to discourage stakeholders from proceeding with the project manager or even with a project altogether. Strong project leaders instill confidence by keeping on top of project planning activities and therefore, remove the need for costly, time-consuming rework and increase success ratios throughout projects companywide.

One of the major aspects of defining a project is defining the high-level scope. If we do not define and gain agreement on scope, we will find it very difficult to manage scope effectively throughout the project.

b. Inefficient use of resources.

Estimating costs and activity levels, scheduling resources, and continually monitoring and adjusting them requires intense planning to ensure a project is moving in the right direction. Effective planning identifies the tools and techniques required to accomplish these tasks and

reduces the risk of having unclear roles and responsibilities. Resources, whether financial or human are usually limited these days and of high value to any business, so if wasted unnecessarily, it has the potential to be disastrous. Given the consequences, this is an area where companies should carefully plan how, when and where to employ limited resources to best maximize effectiveness.

c. Intra-organizational Communication

The state of the internal information and communication systems within an NGO is an integral component of how successfully the organization is able to implement its projects. Internal communication systems are not only connected to the technological capacity of an NGO, but also to its mission, culture, structure, people, policies, and administrative strategies. While this is true for all organizations, NGOs and other relief organizations face particularly complex issues and challenges to the establishment and management of an effective communication systems. Therefore, having an effective communication system will have an adverse impact on project implementations.

d. Increased risk

Identifying risks and performing qualitative and quantitative risk analysis and developing risk management strategies are key to successful project outcomes. These activities can require a lot of time and considerable coordination to complete because they can range from simple to sophisticated and complex depending on project, scope, size, and a range of other factors. The more risk points or the greater the consequences, the more planning is required.

Project planning is not a guarantee that projects will go according to plans. In fact, despite all of the planning that may surround a project, uncertainty is always there, lurking in the background waiting to jump in and disrupt those plans. The key to having great project outcomes is to first recognize from the project's inception why careful project planning is a critical component to reducing risks and increasing success. It may seem more time consuming up front, but will save substantial undue stress, time and costly rework later.

Project planning with precision can be an iterative process, but it's worth it to measure twice and cut once, when compared to the risks associated with poor planning. The important point here is to remember that planning is vital to reducing project risks, which in turn increases the likelihood of a successful project.

2.3.2 Lack of clear understanding of complex internal and external conditions

Most institutional or individual donors impose to a very complex to very less complex conditions to be either strictly or consciously adhered by implementing firms. These are the conditions or terms imposed by the donors that must be followed in projects that they donate or sponsor. When donor attaches so many conditions on the grants or project agreement, the disbursement of funds for the projects may end up being delayed and it can end into cost overrun of the project or the project delaying or abandoned by the funder. It can also extend the project completion time.

Donor requirements, or “restrictions,” may vary greatly, ranging from very limited requirements to complex rules relating to cost allow ability and audit. Additionally, NGOs project work is regulated or controlled by various local or national laws that place additional requirements on their work. It is critical for every project manager to place a high priority on compliance with these requirements. Even if he/she is not directly responsible for such tasks, they are responsible for ensuring that individuals performing compliance-related functions at their office are aware of the requirements and performing their job functions effectively. Of course, attention to – and compliance with – these requirements enhances NGOs relationship and reputation with a donor, and furthers NGOs overall commitment to integrity and accountability.

As noted by (Stephen, 2018) unclearness of the project requirement has been found to be a factor that affects the success of the project. It was found that, when the project requirements are not properly spelled out, it is difficult to complete projects. Unclearness of project requirements could be as a result of different stakeholders’ viewpoint.

Donors and NGOs need bureaucratic systems to organize their work. All NGOs struggle to balance the need for centralized control with the need for decentralized decision-making. Good systems form the backbone of an organization, encouraging good practice. But bad systems soak up a lot of time and energy and can stop NGO staff from working effectively. Many donors and NGOs rely on 'project-based' systems which are based on the assumption that activities and results can be predicted with certainty. Unfortunately, evidence shows that these systems can push against the two golden rules of NGO field work.

Since most donor and NGO rules are very complex, there is tendency of not understanding the ultimate meaning of the conditions by most of the project teams who are assigned to implement the project. There are different training or awareness sessions provided by the different donors and this is a good opportunity for the project teams to grasp the real meaning of the conditions and act accordingly. However, this kind of sessions does not always happen and the project teams might translate or define it as per their understanding and this might affect the implementation of the project since there will be breach of conditions and donors might interrupt the implementation by pending or disallowing payments. This will result in delayed implementation of project activities.

2.3.3 Communication During Projects Implementation

Communication is an essential process in our day-to-day life, and the entire world revolves around it. Lasswell's Maxim defines communication as “who says what to whom in what channel with what effect”. Communication is exchanging of information from one point of the project to the other point in an efficient manner. Like this, there are various definitions and concepts about communication in today's world. However, how important is this communication in project management, we can say that this is “Project—Life Blood” as everything in a project is based on how efficiently we perform this. Communication is an essential tool in the field of project management. It is gaining importance every day and is the center of all management processes soon. The success of a project largely depends on the efficiency of its communication network. It starts working from day one of the venture and continues for the entire life span of the project. It provides regular updates to notify the status of the project as well as its performance capacity.

But surprisingly, it has been found that most projects experience a breakdown in communications. It has been said that 90% of a project manager's time is spent communicating what is going to be done so it's important to make sure everybody gets the right message at the right time.

Communication must mainly deal with the information of employees, the management of changes and the motivation of employees (Dolphin, 2005). Basically, the effectiveness and the commitment of employees depend largely on their knowledge and their understanding of the strategic issues of the company. Therefore, a good communication should enable a better understanding of the strategy, a better commitment and a lower resistance to change which eventually leads to a better implementation of the project.

The internal communication can also have an important strategic impact on the external communication. By external communication we mean the communication with the stakeholders who are not working in the company such as the supplier, the customers or the general public. Indeed, the perception of these stakeholders in some way depends on the perception employees have from their own company. Through the internal communication it is thus also the "corporate reputation" which is at stake. It puts the internal communication in the front line in order to get competitive advantage and to find solutions to strategic problems (Dortok, 2006).

Communication provides a means for the exchange of the information amidst team members. The quality of communication can be described by the frequency, formalization, structure, and openness of the information exchange. Communication that requires a large amount of time preparing and planning before it can occur, example status meeting, scheduled meeting; is considered more formal, whereas spontaneously initiated contacts, example quick phone calls, short emails constitute informal communication. It is this informal spontaneous communication that has been shown to be crucial to project team members because ideas and contributions can be shared, discussed and evaluated with other team members more quickly and efficiently. In addition, project team members should be able to communicate directly without an intermediary. This is because the exchange of information through mediators is time consuming, and a possible cause of faulty transmission. Apart from frequency, formalization and structure, it is critical that members share their information openly with each other. A lack of openness hinders project team members from sharing knowledge and experience on their tasks.

Dolphin (2005) and Dortok (2006) have divided internal communication can into two main information flows. A top-down flow that goes from the top management to the employees and a bottom-up flow that goes from the employees who are on the field to the top management. They in addition noted they are the link between the creation and the implementation of the projects.

The literature is pretty rich concerning the top-down flows. Authors insist a lot on how to get employees involved or how to be sure that the strategy is well understood by employees. A particular attention is given to the relationship between the employees and their company because this relationship becomes more and more strategic and crucial in term of benefit and competitive advantage. That is why employees want now to get early information about the business, in order to play a role in the decisions making process (Dortok, 2006). This is the sign that they are ready to commit themselves to the company. It is moreover interesting to notice that

the main goal of the top-down communication flow often means getting people involved. That is why the top-down communication is so important, and so difficult to carry out. It is a big challenge for top management to communicate the project objectives in a way that it sounds relevant because it is rooted in the heart of the business (Dolphin , 2005).

The bottom-up flow is very often initiated by the top management. The top-down communication has to be undertaken in a way that employees feel the motivation to imply themselves in the company and adopt a value adding attitude. It is the role of the top management to ensure that the information flow works in both ways (Dortok, 2006)

The main objectives of internal communication are informing, carrying out change and motivating. In the matter of pure information, sharing the information is the best way to provoke an answer and to get information on the other hand. There is also here the opportunity to create a company spirit. Concerning changes, developing a bottom-up communication can reduce the reluctance to change. If people are early informed and can thus give feedback because they have the time to give feedback, it can be very beneficial for the business, especially because through a bottom-up flow you get direct information from the field. About motivation, we can say that it is the opportunity to create interaction and exchange between people. And thus it enables to create or to strengthen the communication flow in the both ways (Dolphin, 2005).

Trustworthiness, transparency, focus and stability, objectivity and fairness, confidence, leading by example, energy and motivation, consistency and flexibility, accessibility, clarity, and respect are underscored as essential communication characteristics. It takes considerable thought and careful planning to ensure communication plans take into account stakeholders needs; without these there is potential for communication barriers which can translate into reduced confidence and jeopardize buy-in from team members and stakeholders.

2.3.3.1 Communication Passages During Projects Implementation

A variety of communication methods can be considered, with characteristics of these communication methods ranging from oral to written; synchronous to asynchronous; Internet enabled, other technology enabled or not technology enabled at all; one, few, or many individuals involved in the targeted communication as senders, receivers, or other participants. Potential communication methods can vary widely. Some of them are e-mail, phone, memos, conference call, voice mail, meetings, conversations, reports, press release, video conference, and face-to-face (Grosse, 2002).

According to Goose, 2002, the email has several advantages as a communication channel, mainly due to its asynchronous nature. Moreover, email is important because it creates a fast, reliable form of communication that is free and easily accessible. People get more time to process the message and to think of how to formulate the answer as clear as possible, which can be even more useful when members of a team have different language backgrounds. Then there will for example be enough time to use a dictionary in order to increase the understanding. Van, 1992 noted that People also tend to be less reluctant to ask for clarification when communicating with e-mail compared to more direct communication such as conversing over the phone or face-to-face. Dolphin 1992 discussed how email could be of special interest to project managers when

communicating more complex and important things, especially when there are members on the team with limited language skills in the used language.

The use of the phone and email in project management has been discussed and the email was preferred due to the advantages accrued in using email despite the phone can be used as a more personal and direct way of communication (Grosse, (2002), Dolphin (2005).

(Grosse, (2002), Dolphin (2005). Using videoconferences to communicate can be effective when a large group of people have to talk. Compared to using the phone it is easier to know who is saying what. Something that can be a challenge though is that the quality can be low, which can make the medium less useful and potentially frustrating (Grosse, (2002), Dolphin (2005). Videoconference can be essential for complex tasks such as product development, compared to only communicating with audio.

Face-to-face can be the most powerful mean of communication since it adds personal chemistry and it is easier to observe all the nuances of what is being communicated. It can also be a way to create stronger personal relationships. A drawback can be that it takes a lot of time and money to travel. (Grosse, 2002)

We can consider two main kinds of communication, the oral communication and the written communication. One of the first and main means of communication is of course the face-to face conversation. This kind of communication may occur in a formal meeting or in an informal way, when the two or more interlocutors get together. Another way to communicate verbally is the phone. More recently and thanks to the development of the technology, new media have appeared. For instance, it is now possible to have a video conference where you can speak by word of mouth and see your interlocutor. Concerning the other ways of communication, through written expression, there is of course the possibility to send letters or faxes. But the apparition of the email has revolutionized the way to communicate within companies. The email has become ubiquitous and has now been commonly adopted by the major part of the companies. It has almost become difficult for a company to communicate without email (B. van den Hooff, J. Groot & S. de Jonge, 2005). We can also add the more and more common use of intranet or databases which communicate information to a large amount of people within the company.

What do the users look for in each communication means? Van den Hoof et al (2005) highlight four main criteria that could explain on which basis the choice of media is done, the possibility to get a feedback immediately, the possibility offers by the mean of communication to express different element of communication such as body language, facial expressions, tone of voice, etc The possibility to express subtlety and nuances and finally the possibility offer by the media to focus on a particular person. The environment can influence the use of a certain media. For Example, if all your colleagues and co-workers use emails, you are almost obliged to use Emails too. Each communication means has of course its advantages and its drawbacks.

2.3.4 Managerial factors

The extent of success of donor funded projects is determined by managerial capacity of the human resources of the implementing agencies. (Arndt 2000) argued that the officers in the

donor funds projects chain may lack the formal training in foreign aid management, budgeting and accounting. These weak skills may lead to poor understanding of the donor expenditure protocols resulting in ineligible expenditures, which lead to rejection for further funding by the donor. This may be affected by the quality and timeliness of the liquidation documents which complicate the donor fund release, with obvious implications on levels of donor aid effectiveness.

The project manager is the person, who sets the expectations for a project. The project manager sets the tone in terms of cost, quality and time and makes sure they are not totally conflicted. A project manager has a specific role to achieve business objectives and within the time and to budget with resources signed to project. The project manager controls day-to-day management of the project activities. Project managers should have methodology where they can demonstrate their skills, knowledge, and experiences from different types of industries. Different projects will require different levels of skills and it will require for different levels of project management as well (Maylor, 2005). Project manager competencies are necessary to successfully manage project grows.

The project managers take a major interest in organizations and NGO'S are not excluded. Due to these important roles the interest in which competencies are necessary to successfully manage project grows. This growth of interest has led to growth of standards and certification programs that describe the disciplines practices, offers definition of main terms and processes, explain the main techniques and serves as the basis for assessing project manager competences (Crawford, 2004) The main project management standards and certification programs are provided by the Project Management Institute, International Project Management Association ,Australian Institute of Project Management and the Association for Project Management. These standards are generic and not industry specific

The need for project managers to possess various qualities is stressed by different researchers. Poor project management was at that time the most common reason why projects fail to reach their goals. The lack of formal training as a key reason why projects fail to realize their expected results and continue to be completed late and over or under budget. Following this argument without formal training project managers are not able to acquire the necessary competencies to accomplish their job. Technical experience is emphasized during selection but they do not possess project management competencies which are necessary for dealing with projects. With the arguments the project manager need to possess a set of project management competencies to achieve project success. The question here is which competency areas are very crucial for project managers.

Ideally, in a project manager should have a mix of different knowledge, skills, and experience that include: Knowledge/ experience of political, social and economic context, knowledge/ experience of stakeholders and their concerns, skill/experience in developing strategies, experience in implementing strategies, experience in communications and fundraising and experience in budgeting and risk assessment.

The project management standards present their essential competencies required for project managers, focus has been on the 'hard' technical skills, like the ability to create a work break

down structure, a project budget, Gantt charts neglecting the soft interpersonal skills Crawford (2004). Recently more attention has been given to the 'soft' interpersonal competencies necessary to manage projects Pollack, (2007). The soft skills include things like: interpersonal communication, commitment to success, negotiation, decision making, problem solving, leadership, motivation, team working, flexibility and alertness, human resource management, negotiation and conflict management, positive attitude and ability to influence people. The 'hard' skills are the mechanical or technical skills of planning, estimating, scheduling and controlling a project (Gardiner, 2005). These hard skills are project integration management, project scope, time, cost, risk and quality management, and finally project procurement management.

Pollack 2007 noted that much of the project managers' time will be spent in coordination steering and integrating the activities of some departments and relying on others for information or supporting services. The project managers should thus not be placed in or organizationally inferior positions to the departmental managers. In addition Crawford, 2004 noted that the project managers should display competence, make clear decisions, give precise achievable instructions, delegate well, listen to and accept sound advice, is enthusiastic and confident and thus generally commands respect by example and qualities of leadership.

2.4 Empirical Literature

According to the research conducted by (Stephen and Daniel, 2016), project funding, quality of project management, working environment, communication, adequate resources allocation and organization of the project team are critical factors affecting NGO project implementation. As per their study, there are other key factors that influence projects and these are project product delivery, budget delivery and time delivery affects delivery of the project goals and objectives by the NGOs. Budget and time deliveries are key indicators of an effectively implemented project.

Another study conducted by (Muringo, 2012) find out, competencies of project managers influences effective implementation of donor funded projects. It noted that project manager soft skills more influence the success of the project compared to the technical and academic qualifications.

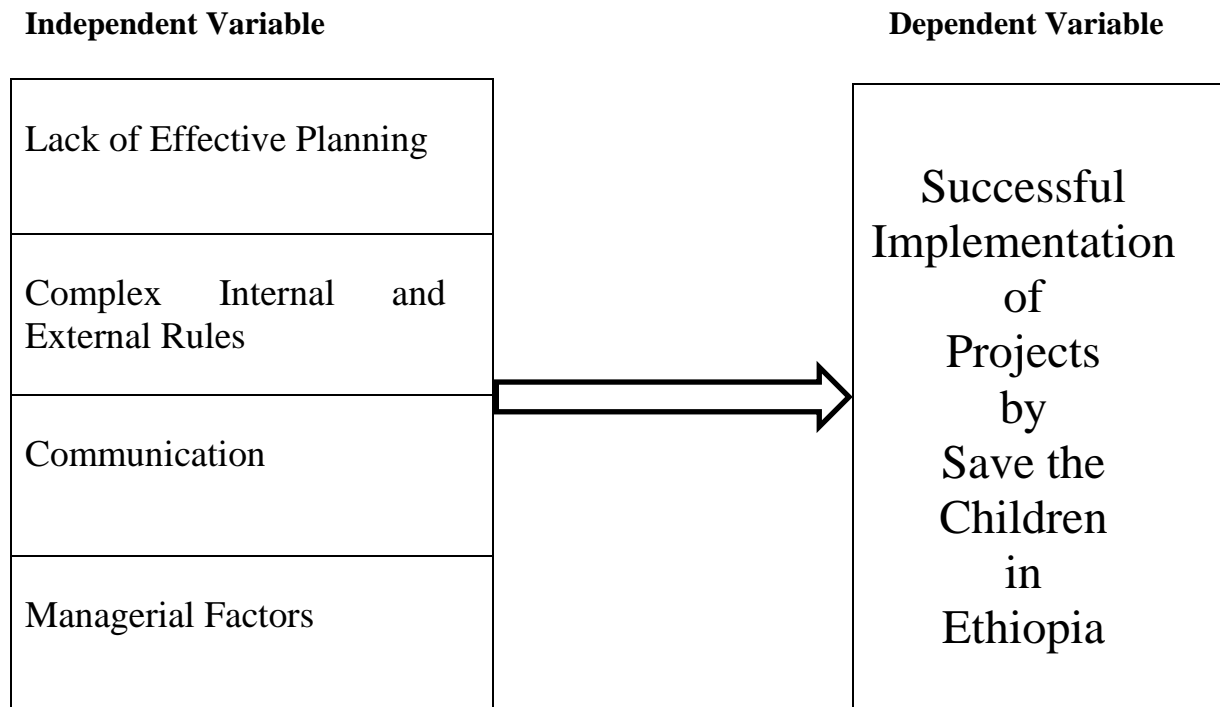
Ashley (2007) did a study on the analysis of project implementation success and concludes that effective project implementation is repeatable and requires a great deal of work to understand it for achieving cost effectiveness and competitive position. They identify planning effort; project team motivation; project manager goal commitment; project manager technical capabilities; control system; and scope and work definition as the important factors.

Isensi (2006) analysed factors that lead to failure of projects in Kenya and established that poor design, poor methods, inadequate experience, underestimation of project duration and poor cost estimation as the factors that caused failure of most projects. Kagiri (2005) conducted a case study on time and cost overruns in projects locally and concluded that vendor inabilities, improper project preparation, resource planning, interpretation of requirements, works definition, timeliness, government bureaucracy and poor risk allocation as the major factors that lead to delay and cost overruns.

Karimi (2008) on the other hand analysed factors which are critical to cost overruns and established five factors which contribute and these are; project organization, environment, project management, project definition and infrastructure. Mwangi (2006) conducted a case study on major factors that affect project management locally. He concluded that inexperienced project managers, poor communication, poor monitoring and control systems negatively affected the project management efficiency.

Karani (2007) carried a study focusing on factors impacting delivery reliability of projects. He identified the critical factors as cash flow problems, delayed payment to vendors, under estimation of project duration, unqualified staff on the project team, inadequate supervision of work and increase in scope of works. He concluded that these inputs and transformational process factors are attributable to the core stakeholders in any project.

2.5 Conceptual Framework



The conceptual framework looked at how various factors under the study influence the performance of Save the Children International projects implemented at different locations of Ethiopia. The conceptual framework of this study was based on four independent variables and one dependent variable as represented diagrammatically in the above figure. The study uses a conceptual framework in order to answer the research questions. According to the study, successful implementation of projects by SCI in Ethiopia will be conceptualized as being dependent on lack of effective planning, complex internal and external rules, effective communication and managerial factors.

CHAPTER THREE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out various stages and phases that will be followed to complete the study. It outlines the research methodology that was used to answer the research questions. According to Brown et al. (2003), research design provides the glue that holds the research project together. Research methodology includes research design, target population and sample, data collection procedures and data analysis procedures.

3.2 Research Design

The research design refers to the overall strategy that we choose to integrate the different components of the study in a coherent and logical way, thereby, ensuring we will effectively address the research problem; it constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement, and analysis of data.

This study adopted a descriptive research design. According to Cooper and Schindler (2003), a descriptive study is concerned with finding out the what, where and how of a phenomenon. Descriptive research design has been chosen because this study seeks to establish factors affecting successful implementation of International NGO projects in Ethiopia the case of Save the Children International projects in Ethiopia.

3.3 Target population

A research population is generally a large collection of individuals or objects that is the main focus of a scientific query. It is for the benefit of the population that researches are done. However, due to the large sizes of populations, researchers often cannot test every individual in the population because it is too expensive and time-consuming. This is the reason why researchers rely on sampling techniques

The target population of this study includes 300 staffs who are currently working with projects implemented at Save the Children International in Ethiopia at specific regional states of Somali, Oromia, Afar and Amhara.

3.4 Sample Design

Sample size determination is the act of choosing the number of observations or replicates to include in a statistical sample. The sample size is an important feature of any empirical study in which the goal is to make inferences about a population from a sample. In practice, the sample size to be used in a study is determined based on the expense of data collection, and the need to have sufficient statistical power.

Stratified sampling will be used to select the project staffs who will participate in the study. This study will stratify the population into the levels of employment at the Save the Children

International. There are three levels of employment comprising of senior and middle level management and other staff. The study will then apply balanced stratified sampling method to select a representative sample for the study. Cooper and Schindler (2003) argue that statistically, in order for generalization to take place, a sample of at least 30 elements (respondents) must exist. Following the high homogeneity among the respondents in the different strata, the study will select 30% of the target population for inclusion in the study. These will be distributed as shown in the table below:

Levels of Staff Positions	Population	Sample Percent	Sample Size	Percentage of Total
Senior Level Staffs	45	30%	13	15.4
Middle Level Staffs	105	30%	32	35.2
Other Level Staffs	150	30%	45	49.4
TOTAL	300		90	100

3.5 Methods of data collection

In order to investigate the research objectives, both secondary and primary data will be collected and analyzed. The first stage of the research process was an extensive search of articles, reports and professional information related to the study area, using the internet and academic databases. The analysis of secondary information provided the general context for initiating the collection, analysis and the interpretation of primary data. Secondary data will be collected in order to ensure relevance to the research problem, eliminate duplication of what has been done and provide a clear understanding of existing knowledge base in the problem area. Primary data will also be collected to get the firsthand data. Questionnaire used to collect primary data.

The qualitative data (non-numerical data) will be collected using the questionnaire. This data will be collected from the open-ended questions where the responses were recorded verbatim. Quantitative and qualitative data will be collected using both open and closed ended questions where the responses were scored on a numerical as well as non-numerical scale. These instruments were developed to contain the items that helped in achieving the objectives of the study.

3.6 Data Analysis Methods

The collected data will be analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative data analysis methods. Quantitative method will involve descriptive analysis. Descriptive analysis such as frequencies and percentages will be used to present quantitative data in form of tables and graphs. Data from questionnaire will be coded and entered into the computer using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). This will involve coding both closed ended items in order to run simple descriptive analyses to get reports on data status. For open ended questions, the study will make use of content analysis to analyze.

3.7 Data Quality Assurance

3.7.1 Validity

Validity concerns the extent to which a measurement actually measures those feature the investigator wishes to measure and provided information that is relevant to the question being asked. Validity was ensured by making sure the sampling techniques were free from bias by giving each subject an equal opportunity to score. The questionnaires were comprehensive to cover all the variables being measured.

Comparison was done between the conceptual framework (own variables) and theoretical framework (what has been said by others) for validation.

3.7.2 Reliability

Reliability concerns the extent to which measurement is repeatable and consistent. This means that the same data was collected each time in repeated observation of the same phenomena.

The reliability of the questionnaire was determined using a pilot study. Therefore 15 employees at SCI were used to test the questionnaire. First, I give the respondents the query as it is and I changed the position of each question and they again filled their response and the response was consistent and this is the way the reliability of the study is ensured.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

The respondents have been approached after the purpose of the study has been explained in detail so that they will be comfortable to give their response in time. All participants are asked to voluntarily participate in the data collection by collaborating in filling the questionnaire and responding. By doing so, the respondents are free of any harm and more importantly their views will be very confidential and anonymous. Moreover, the questionnaire do not have any connection with the respondents since the research is done for academic purpose.

CHAPTER FOUR DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATIONS OF RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter displays the discussion of the final results and the process through which the results were obtained. The data was collected through questionnaires as the main data collection instrument. The data was analyzed using both SPSS and excel worksheets after which meaningful results were derived from the percentages arrived at this process. The purpose of the data analysis was to determine the factors that affects successful implementation of non-governmental organization projects at Save the Children International. The research questions were: - To what extent does poor planning affect the implementation of Save the Children International Projects in Ethiopia, to what extent clarity on complex internal and external rules influence effective implementation of Save the Children International Projects in Ethiopia, what is the impact of communication on the effective implementation of Save the Children International Projects in Ethiopia, how does the extent of managerial factors does affect the implementation of Save the Children International Projects in Ethiopia?

The study targeted 90 respondents, 72 respondents filled in and returned the questionnaires. This represented overall successful rate of 80%. The unsuccessful response rate is only (20%) consisted of those questionnaires that were either not filled, poorly and partially filled.

4.2 Quantitative Data Analysis and Interpretation

4.2.1 Background Information of Respondents

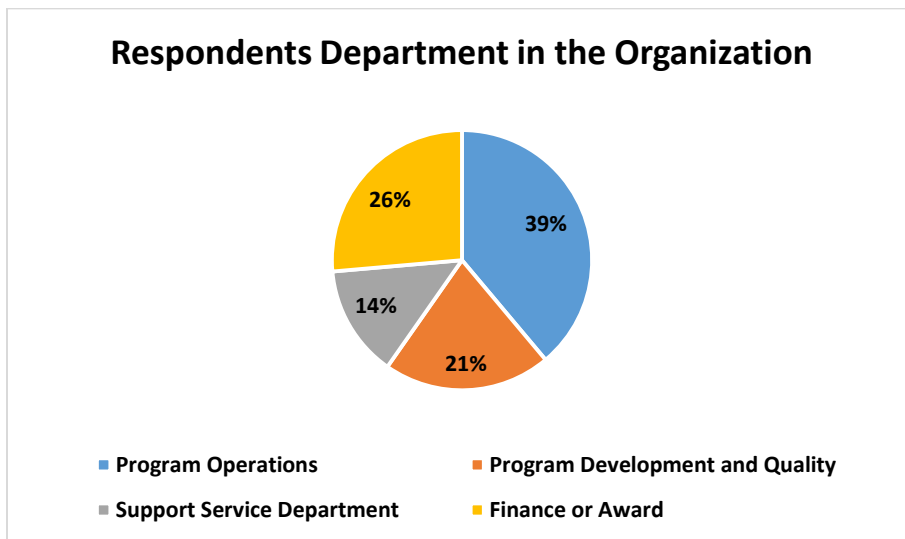
This section presents, gender, age, level of education, their departments in their organization and years worked at Save the Children International.

Table 4.1 Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

Section	Category	Frequency	Percentage %
Gender	Male	46	64
	Female	26	36
	Total	72	100
Age of Respondents	18-24	0	0
	26-35	10	14
	36-45	47	65
	Above 46	15	21
	Total	72	100
Educational Level	Diploma	1	1
	First Degree	15	21
	Above First Degree	56	78
	PHD	0	0
	Total	72	100

As we can see the sex composition of the respondents, 46(64%) of them were males and 26(36%) of them were females. The number of males is slightly greater than number of females. However, the difference in number does not affect the reliability of the data. Moreover, the majority of the respondents i.e. 65% were between 36 and 45 years of age. 10 (14%) were between the age group of 26 and 35 and 15 (21%) were above 46 years of age. Whereas the no of respondents between the ages group of 18-25 is 0. This might indicate the organization has significant maturity level in terms of age amongst its employees and this could help in implementing outlined objectives. 15 (21%) of the respondents are first degree holders and 56 (78%) of them are master's degree. Therefore, the finding verifies that the respondents are qualified to understand the questions concerning factors affecting successful implementation of projects at Save the Children International. Generally, the finding regarding the characteristics of respondents confirms that the respondents are qualified. So, the researcher belief that the response obtained from them is reliable and trust full that enables the researcher to move towards intended research finding.

Figure 4.1 Respondents Department in the organization



As indicated in the above Figure 4.1, majority of the respondents' department falls under operations (39%) and necessarily they are the focal staffs who deal the day to day project implementation of projects directly and this is very useful to get an in depth information for the research title under the study. Other department does also have an indirect responsibility on the direct project implementation.

Table 4.2 Years worked at Save the Children International

No of Years	Frequency	Percentage %
Less than 3 Years	6	8
3 to 7 Years	32	44
7 to 10 Years	21	29
Above 10 Years	13	18
Total	72	100

Findings of this study indicates that 8% of the respondents had worked at SCI for less than three years, 44% between 3-7 years, 29% between 7-10 years while 18% over 12 years.

4.3 Factors affecting successful implementation of projects in international NGO's in Ethiopia

The study is searching to find out the various factors that affects successful implementation of nongovernmental organization projects. The results are presented according to the research questions of objectives of the study.

4.3.1 Lack of effective planning and success of project implementation

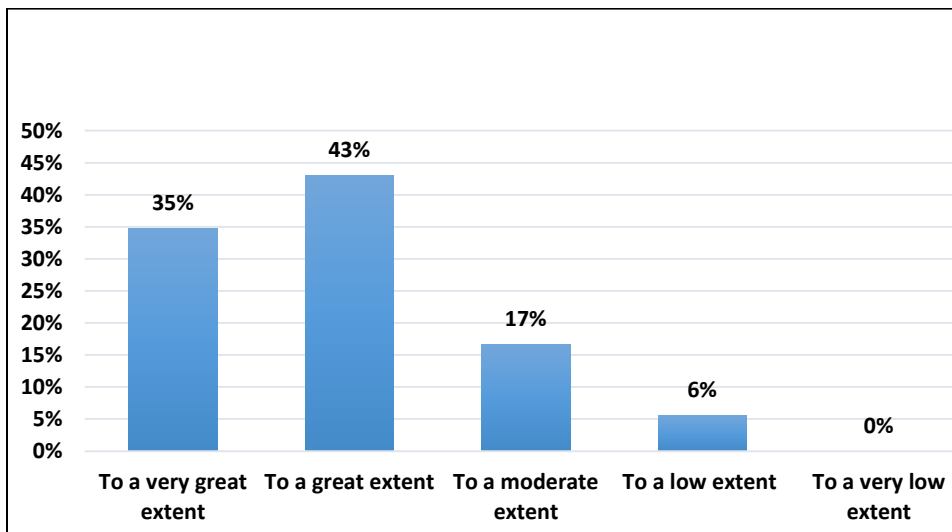
In this research the study attempted to establish how lack of effective planning affects successful project implementation.

Table 4.3 Lack of effective planning and success of project implementation

Response	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	72	100
No	0	0
Total	72	100

As it is presented in the above table all the respondents 100% indicated that lack of effective planning affects successful project implementation by SCI.

Figure 4.2 Extent to which lack of effective planning affects successful project implementation



According to the Figure 4.6 above, 43% of the respondents indicated that to a great extent the lack of effective planning affects successful project implementation, 35% indicated to a very great extent, 17% to a moderate extent and only 6 % to a low extent.

Table 4.4 Agreement that lack of effective planning on successful implementation of projects at SCI

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD
	Freq %	Freq %	Freq %	Freq %	Freq %
Is there an organized project work plan that is mutually understood by all employees in your department before project implementation starts?	6(8)	53 (74)	6 (8)	7 (10)	0 (0)
Are project detailed work plan discussed before project implementation?	10 (14)	36 (50)	13 (18)	10 (14)	0 (0)
Does poor planning in projects affect projects completion time, cost and its quality?	40 (56)	23(32)	9 (13)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Does clarity on project work plan for staff members affect the projects implementation?	19 (26)	34 (47)	13 (18)	0 (0)	3 (4)
Does SCI have always implemented projects in time?	4 (6)	21 (29)	11 (15)	36 (50)	0 (0)
Does SCI implements project work plan effectively?	4 (6)	23 (32)	20 (28)	25 (35)	0 (0)

From the Table 4.7 respondents agreed that there were well organized project work plan that is mutually understood by all employees before project implementation starts as shown by a 59(82%) response, again 46(64%) agreed that project detailed work plan are discussed before project implementation, 63 (88%) agreed poor planning in projects affect projects completion time, cost and its quality, clarity on project work plan for staff members affect the projects implementation as shown by a frequency percentage of 73%, half of the respondents 36 (50%) agreed SCI do not always implemented projects in time, quite a number of respondents agreed that SCI do not implements project work plan effectively as shown by a percentage of 35%. Respondents were also asked to state what would be done differently to ensure staff understand and implement the project work plan as per donor agreement. The respondents noted that the planning process should be detail and participatory that includes all project staffs. Most of the respondent noted that kick off and project launch meetings representing all project staff and all project stakeholders will need to be conducted beforehand in order to enable them to understood and agree on the timeframe and develop realistic work plan and every time a new employee joins the project proper orientation and induction on the purpose, outcome and outputs of the project as well as project document need to be provided. Moreover, issues relate to late project signing with government counterpart, delay of donor approval for amendments, issues with late finding and hiring the right technical and operational project staff, lack of effective logistics support needed to run the project smoothly and on time implementation of project activities, poor communication among project teams, lack of detailed implementation plan or vague description of project activities and timeline and project management inefficiencies to follow up on a timely

manner the progress of project implementation and failure to take action when delays occur are some of the hindrances that most of respondents gave as a response.

4.3.2 Influence of clarity on complex internal and external rules on successful implementation of projects

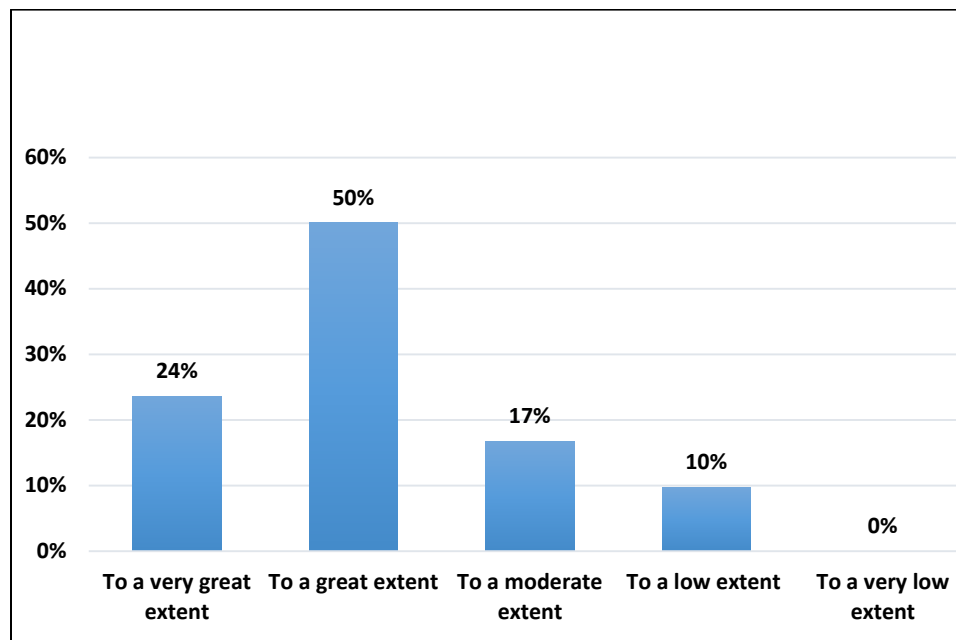
The second objective of the study was to determine how clarity on complex internal and external rules affects effective implementation of projects by SCI.

Table 4.5 Clarity on complex internal and external rules and success of project implementation

Response	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	72	100
No	0	0
Total	72	100

All the respondents 100% indicated that clarity on complex internal and external rules affects effective project implementation by SCI.

Figure 4.3 Extent to which clarity of complex internal and external rules have any influence on successful project implementation at SCI



According to the Figure 4.3 above, 50% of the respondents indicated that to a great extent clarity on complex internal and external rules affects successful project implementation, 24% indicated to a very great extent, 17% to a moderate extent and only 10 % to a low extent.

Table 4.6 Agreement that clarity on internal and external rules on successful implementation of projects at SCI

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD
	Freq %	Freq %	Freq %	Freq %	Freq %
Does all staff have mutual understanding of internal and external rules and regulations?	2 (3)	27 (38)	21 (29)	20 (28)	2 (3)
All project team clearly understand the expectations of their specific roles and responsibilities with regard to both internal and external rules and regulations?	2 (3)	39 (54)	12 (17)	19 (26)	0 (0)
Do you believe that all internal and external rules are clearly clarified and discussed with all staffs before project implementation?	2 (3)	26 (36)	25 (35)	19 (26)	0 (0)
Do complex internal and external rules have any impact of project implementation?	23 (32)	41 (57)	2 (3)	6 (8)	0 (0)
Do you believe that SCI provides enough induction on donor and internal rules and regulations for project staffs before project implementation starts?	4 (6)	40 (56)	16 (22)	12 (17)	0 (0)

From the Table 4.6 there was an agreement that 42% staff have mutual understanding of internal and external rules and regulations, all project team clearly understand the expectations of their specific roles and responsibilities with regard to both internal and external rules and regulations as shown by a percentage occurrence of 57% at the same time 26% disagree with this statement. There was also a neutral agreement that all internal and external rules are clearly clarified and discussed with all staffs before project implementation as shown by a percentage of 35% and agreement to this statement is 39%. 89% of respondents agreed that complex internal and external rules have an impact on successful project implementation, and also 62% of the respondents believed that SCI provides enough induction on donor and internal rules and regulations for project staffs before project implementation.

Respondents were also asked to state what would be done differently to ensure all staff clearly understand and implement the project as per both donor and internal requirements. The respondents noted that, passing clear communication and creating common understanding among the staffs on both donor and internal requirement at the beginning of the project is very crucial for successful project implementation. Refresher training on the rules and regulation for staffs who work for a longer period is equally important to ensure success of a project. Orientation and regular update on the rules should be provided to all staffs. Some of the respondents says that, it will be good if checklist that outlines key internal and external rules is developed for frontline project team to make use of it during the day to day project implementation.

4.3.3 Influence of communication on successful implementation of projects

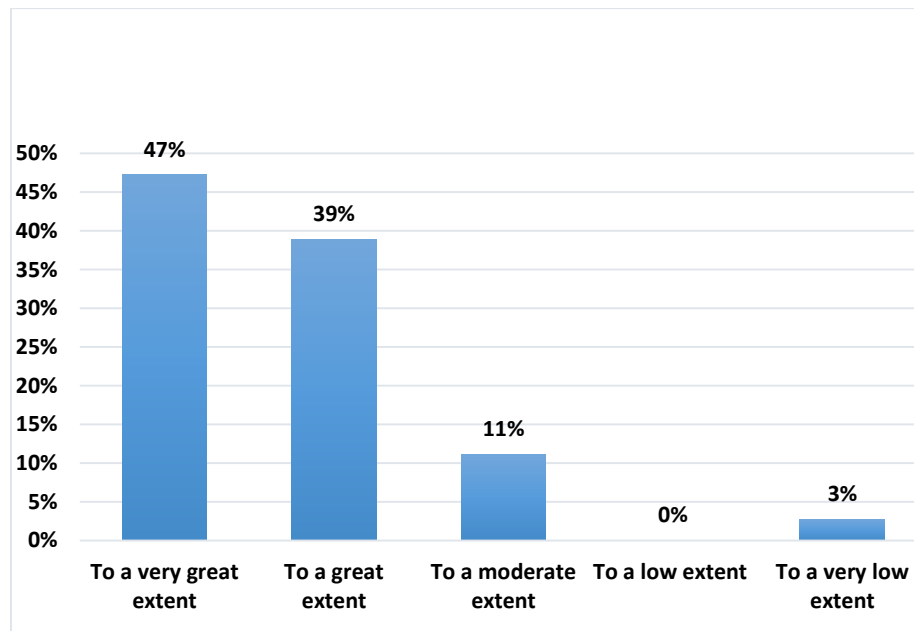
The third objective of the study was to determine how communication affects success of project implementation by SCI.

Table 4.7 Communication and success of project implementation

Response	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	72	100
No	0	0
Total	72	100

All the respondents 100% indicated that communication affects effective project implementation by SCI.

Figure 4.4 Extent to which communication have any influence on successful project implementation at SCI



According to the Figure 4.4 above, 47% of the respondents indicated that to a very great extent communication affects successful project implementation, 39% indicated to a great extent, 11% to a moderate extent and only 3% to a very low extent.

Table 4.8 Agreement that communication on successful implementation of projects at SCI

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD
	Freq %	Freq %	Freq %	Freq %	Freq %
Do emails and internet help in project Implementation?	38 (53)	27 (38)	3 (4)	4 (6)	0 (0)
There is a well-defined way of communicating projects been implemented in your theme.	12 (17)	43 (60)	17 (24)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Information with regard to project progress update is timely communicated	6 (8)	34 (47)	23 (32)	9 (13)	0 (0)
Does information and communication technology (ICT) help	25 (35)	43 (60)	4 (6)	0 (0)	0 (0)

in communicating project?					
Project status meeting are informative	13 (18)	41 (57)	4 (6)	10 (14)	4 (6)

91% of the respondents indicated that emails and internet is very helpful in project implementation, disagree to the reaction that status meeting is important as indicated by a 20% response, agree to the reaction that project progress timely communicated as indicated by 53% response, agree that there is a well-defined way of communicating projects been implemented in the theme and ICT help in communicating project efficiency as indicated by a response percentage of 77% and 95% respectively.

Respondents were also asked to state the frequently used channel of communication during projects implementation; they indicated that telephone, email and face to face discussion were used on day to day running of the project. They also indicated status different types of meetings were also used to update the team on project progress. Weekly and monthly written reports on project progress were also done.

4.3.4 Managerial factors and successful implementation of projects

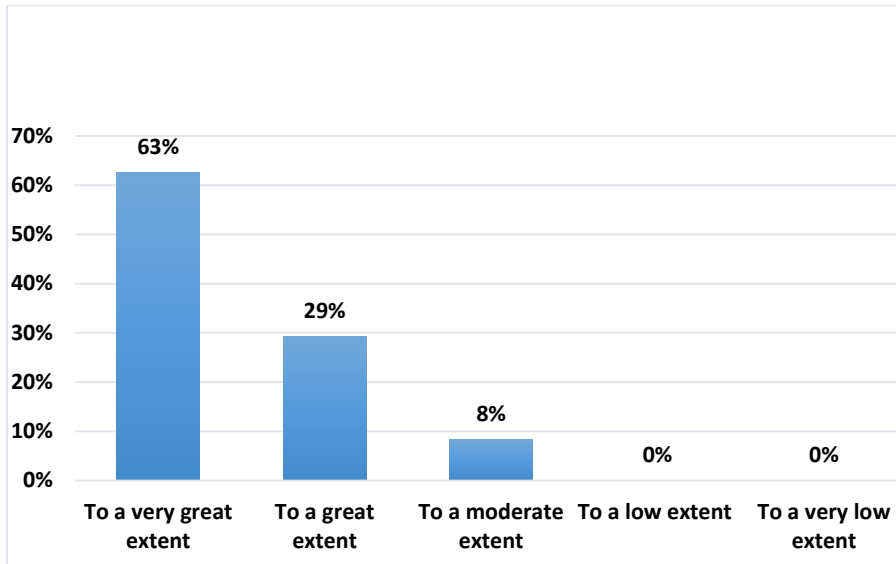
The last objective of the study was to determine how managerial success of project implementation by SCI.

Table 4.9 Managerial factors and success of project implementation

Response	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	72	100
No	0	0
Total	72	100

According to Table 4.9, 100% of the respondents indicated that project manager competencies influence effective project implementation by SCI.

Figure 4.5 Extent to which managerial factors have any influence on successful project implementation at SCI



According to the Figure 4.5, 63% of the respondents indicated that to a very great extent project manager competencies influences effective project implementation, 29% indicated to a great extent and 8% to a medium extent.

Table 4.10 Agreement that managerial factors on successful implementation of projects at SCI

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD
	Freq %	Freq %	Freq %	Freq %	Freq %
Do project managers have a role in facilitating project implementation?	45 (62.5)	27 (37.5)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Do you think project managers' technical capabilities is significant in project management?	43 (60)	29 (40)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Educational qualifications of a project manager is important in project management.	32 (44)	37 (51)	0 (0)	3 (4)	0 (0)
Do you think interpersonal communication, commitment to success, negotiation and ability to influence people influence project manager effective implementation of projects?	48 (67)	22 (31)	0 (0)	2 (3)	0 (0)
Do you think decision making, problem solving, leadership, motivation and team working influence project manager effective implementation of projects?	38 (53)	28 (39)	0 (0)	6 (8)	0 (0)
Do you think flexibility and alertness, human resource management, conflict management and positive attitude influence project manager effective implementation of projects?	36 (50)	32 (44)	0 (0)	4 (6)	0 (0)

From the Table 4.10 there was an agreement that to a great extent soft skills of a project manager influence effective implementation of projects as shown by 94% of response percentage, educational qualifications of a project manager is important in project management as shown by a 96% response percentage, there was also an agreement that project manager facilitate project implementation as shown by 100% response percentage. 98% of the respondents agreed that project manager technical experiences on negotiation and interpersonal communication influence effective project implementation. Likewise, 92% of the responded agreed that decision making, problem solving, leadership, motivation and team working influence project manager effective implementation of projects. Moreover, flexibility and alertness, human resource management, conflict management and positive attitude influence project manager effective implementation of projects a shown by again 94% response percentage. Respondents were also asked to list down three qualities all project managers should have, accordingly most of them agree that managers should be democrat, influential, communicative, decision maker, problem solver and knowledgeable as well.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This last chapter of the thesis work will have four main sections. First, summary of the major findings will be presented. Then the conclusion derived from the findings will be offered followed by recommendations made based on the conclusions. And finally, recommendation for further studies will be provided.

5.2 Summary of Findings

This section dealt on the summary of the findings generated from data analysis. The summary was done along with the objectives of the study.

- All the respondents 100% indicated that lack of effective planning affects successful project implementation by SCI. 43% of the respondents indicated that to a great extent lack of effective planning affects successful project implementation, 35% indicated to a very great extent, 17% to a moderate extent and only 6 % to a low extent.
- There was an agreement that there were well organized project work plan that is mutually understood by all employees before project implementation starts as shown by a 59(82%) response, again 46(64%) agreed that project detailed work plan are discussed before project implementation, 63 (88%) agreed poor planning in projects affect projects completion time, cost and its quality, clarity on project work plan for staff members affect the projects implementation as shown by a frequency percentage of 73%, half of the respondents 36 (50%) agreed SCI do not always implemented projects in time, quite a number of respondents agreed that SCI do not implements project work plan effectively as shown by a percentage of 35%. The findings imply that the lack of effective planning affects implementation of donor funded projects. These findings are in agreement with the views of (Kerzner 2013) without proper planning, programs and projects can start off “behind the eight ball. Lack of proper planning produce uncertainty, affects efficiency of project operation and there will be lack of better understanding of project objectives by all project teams.
- The second objective of the study was to determine how clarity on complex internal and external rules affects effective implementation of projects by SCI. All the respondents 100% indicated that clarity on complex internal and external rules affects effective project implementation by SCI. 50% of the respondents indicated that to a great extent clarity on complex internal and external rules affects successful project implementation, 24% indicated to a very great extent, 17% to a moderate extent and only 10 % to a low extent. 29% staff have mutual understanding of internal and external rules and regulations, all project team clearly understand the expectations of their specific roles and responsibilities with regard to both internal and external rules and regulations as shown by a percentage

occurrence of 57% at the same time 26% disagree with this statement. There was also a neutral agreement that all internal and external rules are clearly clarified and discussed with all staffs before project implementation as shown by a percentage of 35% and agreement to this statement is 39%. 89% of respondents agreed that complex internal and external rules have an impact on successful project implementation, and also 62% of the respondents believed that SCI provides enough induction on donor and internal rules and regulations for project staffs before project implementation. This is in agreement with the findings of Stephen, (2018) unclearness of the project requirement has been found to be a factor that affects the success of the project. It was found that, when the project requirements are not properly spelled out, it is difficult to complete projects.

- The third objective of the study was to determine how communication affects success of project implementation by SCI. All the respondents 100% indicated that, communication affects effective project implementation by SCI. 47% of the respondents indicated that to a very great extent communication affects successful project implementation, 39% indicated to a great extent, 11% to a moderate extent and only 3% to a very low extent. These findings are in agreement with the study of Gemeundenand Lechler (1997), that communication and information flow is a direct prerequisite of project success.
- 91% of the respondents indicated that emails and internet is very helpful in project implementation, these findings are in agreement according to Goose, 2002; email has several advantages as a communication channel mainly due to its spontaneous nature. In addition, Dolphin 1992, noted that email help in communicating complex projects. Disagree to the reaction that status meeting is important as indicated by a 20% response, agree to the reaction that project progress timely communicated as indicated by 55% response, agree that there is a well-defined way of communicating projects been implemented in the theme and ICT help in communicating project efficiency as indicated by a response percentage of 77% and 95% respectively.
- Respondents were also asked to state the frequently used channel of communication during projects implementation; they indicated that telephone, email and face to face discussion were used on day to day running of the project. They also indicated that different types of status meetings were also used to update the team on project progress. Weekly and monthly written reports on project progress were also done.
- The fourth objective of the study was to determine how managerial factors affects success of project implementation by SCI. 100% of the respondents indicated that managerial factors influence effective project implementation by SCI. 63% of the respondents indicated to a very great extent managerial factors influences effective project implementation, 29% indicated to a great extent and 8% to a medium extent.
- There was an agreement that to a great extent soft skills of a project manager influence effective implementation of projects as shown by 94% of response percentage, educational qualifications of project manager is important in project management as shown by a 96% response percentage, there was also an agreement that project manager facilitate project

implementation as shown by 100% response percentage and project manager technical experiences shown by again 100% response percentage. This is in agreement with the findings of Pollack, (2007), who indicated that ‘soft’ interpersonal competencies necessary to manage projects. The soft skills include things like: interpersonal communication, commitment to success, negotiation, decision making, problem solving, leadership, motivation, team working, flexibility and alertness, human resource management, negotiation and conflict management, positive attitude and ability to influence people.

5.3 Conclusions

It was possible to conclude the following based on the objectives and research questions of the study.

- Lack of effective planning affects effective implementation of donor funded projects. The study concludes that SCI has well organized project work plan that is mutually understood by all employees before project implementation. In addition, project detailed work plan are discussed before project implementation, poor planning in projects affect projects completion time, cost and its quality, clarity on project work plan for staff members affect the projects implementation and agreed SCI do not always implemented projects in time.
- The study concludes that clarity on complex internal and external rules affects effective project implementation by SCI. The study noted that SCI project staffs have mutual understanding of internal and external rules and regulations. All project team clearly understand the expectations of their specific roles and responsibilities with regard to both internal and external rules and regulations but still the study also noted that there are staffs who do not understand their expectations with regard to both internal and external rules and regulations.
- The study also concludes that communication influences effective implementation of donor funded projects, the study concludes that SCI use email to communicate during project implementation. This ensures information to be timely communicated and be informative. Status meetings are also conducted.
- It also concludes that study also concludes that managerial factors affects successful implementation of donor funded projects. It noted that project manager soft skills more influence the success of the project compared to the technical and academic qualifications.

5.4 Recommendations

As per the discussions in the previous sections, the researcher strongly puts forward the following recommendations

- In order for SCI to implement its donor funded projects successfully, project work plan must be clear to the project employees and procedures should be in place to discuss the requirements of the project before starting to implement.

- Passing clear communication and providing strong induction in creating common understanding among the staffs on both donor and internal requirement at the beginning of the project is very crucial for successful project implementation. Beyond induction, regular awareness creation workshops, training and discussions is very necessary to see practical challenges and tackle them to ensure project success.
- On communication, the study recommends that communication should flow freely both upward and downward. Emails, status meeting and verbal communication should be frequently used. In case of technical projects emails should be used in order to give the respondent time to think before replying.
- The study further recommends that all projects should have project managers as they influence implementation of projects, it also recommends that besides technical and education background, the project manager must also have soft skills for successful project implementation.
- The study in particular recommends that SCI should focus on the effective planning, clarity on complex internal and external rules, communication and on managerial factors.

5.5 Recommendations for Further Studies

The study focused on the factors affecting successful implementation of projects at SCI and established that lack of effective planning, clarity on complex internal and external rules, communication and managerial factors affects successful implementation of projects at SCI. In the course of work, I found the following variables need further research - Leadership and project management, Project Monitoring and evaluation and Supply Chain effectiveness and project management.

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Appendix 1
Addis Ababa University
School of Postgraduate Study
Department of Project Management
Questionnaire

Dear respondents,

First of all, I would like to express my gratitude in advance for your willingness to spend your valuable time to respond to this research questionnaire. I am conducting a research on “Factors affecting successful implementation of projects in international NGOs in Ethiopia. The case of Save the Children International projects in Ethiopia”

All the information provided is used purely for academic purposes and will be treated with utmost confidentiality. The final result of this research shall be used for academic purpose and the final recommendation and finding shall be forwarded to the respective office of Save the Children of Ethiopia for their preventive measure and actions.

Each of your genuine reply to the research questions is very important in assessing major factors affecting successful implementation of Save the Children International projects and I really appreciate your willingness to help. I will be pleased to discuss any concerns you may have about the participation in this research.

Thank you very much for your cooperation and valuable time.

Yours sincerely,

Blen Damtew

Instructions

- No need to write your name
- If you have any questions, please contact me through my cell phone number 0911 69 86 02 or email me blen.damtew@savethchildren.org

Kindly answer the following questions either by ticking the appropriate box and or giving your answer or suggestion on the space provided when appropriate.

Part 1 Background Information

1. What is your gender?

Male Female

2. In what age bracket do you fall?

18 – 25 26 – 35 36 – 45 Above 46

3. What is the level of Education that you attained?

Diploma First Degree Above first degree PHD

Others, please specify

4. Would you please specify your department in the organization

Programme Operations Support Service Department
 Programme Development and Quali Finance or Award

5. How long have you been working with Save the Children?

less than 3 years 3-7 Years 7-10 Years Above 10 years

Part 2

1. THE EFFECTS OF LACK OF EFFECTIVE PLANNING ON SUCCESSFUL PROJECTS IMPLEMENTATION

1) Does lack of effective planning have any impact on successful implementation of projects at SCI?

Yes No

2) To what extent does lack of effective planning influence effective project implementation at SCI?

To a very great extent To a low extent
 To a great extent
 To a moderate Extent
 To a very low Extent

3) To what level do you agree with the following statements which relate to the impact of poor planning on effective implementation of projects? Rating scale 1-5, where: 1=Strongly disagree, 2= Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4= Agree, 5=Strongly agree.

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	5	4	3	2	1
Is there an organized project work plan that is mutually understood by all employees in your department before project implementation starts?					
Are project detailed work plan discussed before project implementation?					
Does poor planning in projects affect projects completion time, cost and its quality?					
Does clarity on project work plan for staff members affect the projects implementation?					
Does SCI have always implemented projects in time?					
Does SCI implements project work plan effectively?					

4) What would be done differently to ensure staff understand and implement the project plan as per donor agreement?

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5) List some of the hindrances encountered during at the project startup and during implementation?

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2. INFLUENCE OF CLARITY ON COMPLEX INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL RULES ON THE EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF PROJECTS

6) Does clarity on complex internal and external rules have any impact on successful implementation of projects at SCI?

Yes No

7) To what extent does clarity of complex internal and external rules have any influence on successful project implementation at SCI?

To a very great extent To a very low Extent
 To a great extent
 To a moderate Extent To a low extent

8) To what level do you agree with the following statements which relate to the impact of clarity of complex internal and external rules on effective implementation of NGO projects? Rating scale 1-5, where: 1=Strongly disagree, 2= Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4= Agree, 5=Strongly agree.

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	5	4	3	2	1
Does all staff have mutual understanding of internal and external rules and regulations?					
All project team clearly understand the expectations of their specific roles and responsibilities with regard to both internal and external rules and regulations?					
Do you believe that all internal and external rules are clearly clarified and discussed with all staffs before project implementation?					
Do complex internal and external rules have any impact of project implementation?					
Do you believe that SCI provides enough induction on donor and internal rules and regulations for project staffs before project implementation starts?					

9) What would be done differently to ensure all staff clearly understand and implement the project as per both donor and internal requirements?

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3. INFLUENCE OF COMMUNICATION ON EFFECTIVE PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

10) Does communication influence effective project implementation at SCI?

Yes No

11) To what extent does communication influence on successful project implementation at SCI?

To a very great extent To a very low Extent
 To a great extent
 To a moderate Extent To a low extent

12) What is your level of agreement with the following statements which relate to the impact of communication on effective implementation of NGO projects? Using rating scale 1-5, where: 1=strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3=neutral, 4= agree, 5=strongly agree.

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	5	4	3	2	1
Do emails and internet help in project Implementation?					
There is a well-defined way of communicating projects been implemented in your theme.					
Information with regard to project progress update is timely communicated					
Does information and communication technology (ICT) help in communicating project?					
Project status meeting are informative					

13) Which is the frequently used channel of communication during projects implementation?

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4. INFLUENCE OF MANAGERIAL FACTORS ON THE EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF PROJECTS

14) Do project manager competencies influence effective project implementation at SCI?

Yes No

15) To what extent does a project manager competency influence effective project implementation at SCI?

To a very great extent To a very low Extent
 To a great extent
 To a moderate Extent To a low extent

16) What is your level of agreement with the following statements which relate to the impact of managerial factors on effective implementation of NGO projects? Using rating scale 1-5, where: 1=strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3=neutral, 4= agree, 5=strongly agree.

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Do project managers have a role in facilitating project implementation?					
Do you think project managers' technical capabilities is significant in project management?					
Educational qualifications of a project manager is important in project management.					
Do you think interpersonal communication, commitment to success, negotiation and ability to influence people influence project manager effective implementation of projects?					
Do you think decision making, problem solving, leadership, motivation and team					

working influence project manager effective implementation of projects?					
Do you think flexibility and alertness, human resource management, conflict management and positive attitude influence project manager effective implementation of projects?					

17) List three qualities all project managers should have

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