

**INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS AND PERFORMANCE OF RURAL
SUPPORT PROJECTS IN RWANDA
A CASE STUDY OF PRIME PROJECT IN EASTERN PROVINCE**

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ABSTRACT

The study set out to investigate the influence of internal stakeholders on performance of rural support projects. Internal stakeholders are the key component in the organization or the project as they constitute a human capital of paramount importance. The ultimate success of a project depends, in most cases, on the makeup and abilities of the project team. All the groups of internal stakeholders have responsibilities and duties that impact considerably the smooth running of the project. It is essential to identify all the internal stakeholders as early as possible in the project life. Failure to engage them may be fatal. Any internal stakeholder has the ability to ruin the project plans through use of their power and influence. The involvement of internal stakeholders throughout the project is an essential success factor for the project as these individuals have the authority and power to make decisions about money and other resources.

The study had the objectives of finding out the role that internal stakeholders play to enhance performance of projects and to identify the circumstances liable to induce them to be fully committed to the project goals and therefore yield productivity needed. To achieve the set objectives, the research was conducted in a rural project known as PRIME Project, in Eastern Province more particularly in Bugesera and Nyagatare districts, where from a target population of 264 internal stakeholders, a sample of 49 respondents was taken. Data collection was carried out by means of questionnaires and interviews instruments.

The findings enabled the researcher to assess the extent to which internal stakeholders influence the project's success. The data obtained was computed, analyzed and interpreted in order to find out if the findings were matching with the object of the study.

The findings revealed that internal stakeholders are the key pillar for the achievement of the project goals. Nevertheless, in order to effectively contribute to the project success, it is absolutely necessary that they are well managed. Management support systems must be applied to stimulate them to accomplish their duties in a suitable manner. Fair working conditions are very important because when employees are motivated, they get committed and involved in the organizational performance.

The findings confirmed a strong correlation of management support systems such as motivation, management development program, employee empowerment and effective communication and the enhancement of performance which is indicated by the quality of outputs, the quantity of outputs, the timeliness of the project completion and the cooperativeness of the project team.

The study recommended that the needs and expectations of employees, at all levels, must be given the consideration they deserve. They need to be provided with skills, knowledge and other tools to

enable them to contribute to the project performance. Compensation policy should be satisfactory both to the staff and management as it has been proved that there is a positive relationship between high employee morale and enhanced performance.

All the groups of internal stakeholders must play their respective parts in the project and executive managers should look carefully at the project management versus project technical requirements as they assign the responsibilities of project manager to any individual. The project manager should be prepared to address human resource issues in the project. Doing them well benefits the project manager, the organization that undertook the project, and individual team members. These human resource dimensions of a project include performance evaluation reward and recognition. Acknowledging and rewarding the contribution of team members is an important aspect of project closure.