

**AN ASSESSMENT OF THE DISCREPANCY BETWEEN PUBLIC RURAL  
DEVELOPMENT POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION IN KENYA: A CASE  
STUDY OF KAJIADO DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2008-2012**

**Gikera Kahara  
(MAPA/111/03311)**



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## Abstract

This research project analyses the discrepancy between the Kenya Government's rural development policies and their implementation through the District Development Plans. Although there have been advances in rural poverty development approaches, those approaches have not eliminated the gap between public policy as formulated and its implementation. In assessing implementation approaches, this research draws on experiences in implementing some sample projects in the Kajiado District Development Plan 2008-2012. The assessment has been informed by theories of rural poverty, policy formulation and policy implementation. The findings of this study show that only 44% of the projects implemented have been successful. The contributory factors for this success is mainly attributable to stakeholders participation in project implementation. According to Matland's ambiguity-conflict model (Matland, 1995), most projects have shown low-ambiguity and low-conflict characteristics, thereby rendering themselves to an administrative top-down formulation and implementation approach, wherein other crucial issue to address is the resource allocation. The study also reveals that the monitoring and coordination mechanisms have been reasonably addressed with commensurate impact on project implementation. This is attained through the reporting obligations and accountability requirements in the employee performance contracts. However, the introduction of this mechanism has in some cases resulted in the pursuit of narrow objectives in accordance with the performance targets set for specific employees, and thereby compromising the integration of wider objectives. One possible solution is for the integrative targets to be built into the employee performance contracts. Beyond that is the need to bridge the persistent policy formulation-implementation gap (with only 44% successful implementation). The study recommends a more "liberalised" results-oriented implementation approach, which would give the project managers more leeway in determining and deciding the means for achieving the stated and agreed results in accordance with the defined quality standards and timeframes, subject to specified unit costs (resources availed). The attendant issues for such an approach would need to be articulated in a further research. That approach should also build on the gains made through the employee performance contracts system that the government has adopted and implemented as a tool for improved public service delivery and efficiency.