
An Assessment of Challenges Faced in Implementing Projects: The Case of Young Women's Christian Association

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Abstract:

Purpose: *The objective of this study is to assess the challenges that Young Women's Christian Association face in carrying out their projects.*

Design/methodology/approach: *This study has made use of descriptive research design. Mixed research approaches has been adopted to carry out the study. Primary data needed for the study was collected from 33 respondents which are selected using census. Then the data presented quantitatively using descriptive statistics with the help of table, frequency and percentage, mean and standards deviation. Semi-structured interview was also conducted with the 3 project managers and 3 volunteers, and analysed qualitatively.*

Findings: *Based on the finding, it is concluded that for the case of Young Women's Christian Association, the challenges they face in implementing projects are, lack of financial resources, duration of projects, engagement of stakeholders, human resource shortage, issue of gender, and feminist ideology.*

Practical implications: *This study recommended that they should consider different approaches to make themselves more visible to attract positive publicity and attract more collaborators whether for financial support or human resource support; to look for ways to increase their financial resources outside of donors.*

Originality/value: *The study has practical significance since it clearly states hurdles that is hindeling in the project implementation sphere and shines a light on how they are challenging an organization suchlike Young Women's Christian Association.*

Keywords: *Projects, challenges, implementation.*

JEL codes: *G03, G30.*

Paper type: *Research article.*

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1. Introduction

A project is defined as a sequence of tasks that must be completed to attain a certain outcome. According to the Project Management Institute (PMI), the term project refers to any temporary endeavor with a definite beginning and end. Projects are the tool through which the general process of capital formation and assignation of resources takes place. A project is an activity to meet the creation of a unique product or service and thus activities that are undertaken to accomplish routine activities cannot be considered projects. Projects are utilized as a means of directly or indirectly achieving objectives within an organization's strategic plan (PMI, 2013).

The project manager is the person assigned by the performing organization to lead the team that is responsible for achieving the project objectives. The role of a project manager is distinct from a functional manager or operations manager. Project managers accomplish work through the project team and other stakeholders. Effective project managers require a balance of ethical, interpersonal, and conceptual skills that help them analyze situations and interact appropriately (A guide to the project management body of knowledge 5th Edition, 2013).

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, 2012). Project manager and project team have one shared goal, to carry out the work of the project for the purpose of meeting the project's objectives. A project typically has four major phases: initiation, planning, implementation and closure. The project manager coordinates the preparation of a project budget which is used to monitor and control cost expenditures during project implementation (Kumar, 2022).

Project implementation is essential for an organization to execute the very tasks supporting its core business functions. In other words, establishing an implementation plan is essential for organizations because it can: map step-by-step norms for project implementation to see more projects get done; accomplishing projects on time and on budget; executing projects while adhering to more consistent quality standards; see new tools and technology have higher adoption and usage rates and witness growth in overall quality and scope of value-adding work. Project encompasses different activities to be developed using resources to obtain benefits (Gittinger, 1972).

Project implementation plan outlines the exact course of action to move business initiatives from abstract ideas to reality. Successful project implementation approaches strive to create step-by-step, replicable processes that harmonize project execution across teams and departments. Organizations with successful project implementation strategies have defined work according to this economy of repetition.

As a result, a business is better able to check off high-value projects while staying within predetermined resource parameters, ultimately improving that organization's sense of "business as usual". As the implementation process is a very essential aspect of the project lifecycle stage, it may come with its own challenges and difficulties. Therefore, understanding the common challenges of implementing project management and ensuring that there will be solutions or ways around them will help increase the success factor of the project (Choudhuri, 2015).

In implementing projects, project managers and the organization are not the only ones involved. Every project especially a non-governmental organization project involves the community as well. Hence, we have the project implementers and those for which the project is being carried out for. Therefore active community participation in project planning and implementation may improve project design through the use of local knowledge; increase project acceptability; produce a more equitable distribution of benefits; promote local resource mobilization; and help ensure project sustainability (Bamberger, 1986).

Project manager acts as a facilitator and needs to understand the cultural variations and possible sensitivities of different individuals to be able to attempt to gain alignment and coordination of the team to perform cohesively on current and forthcoming projects. Project managers deal with a number of challenges in daily activities, which may require them to employ effective supervision criteria to reduce flawed results, rejection, and rework activities. As such, project managers are faced with the issues associated with staff recruitment, teamwork management, cultural changes and issues and labor related challenges (Padalkar and Gopinath, 2016).

Implementation gap is a disconnect between what a project is supposed to achieve and its actual results. The most common problems in projects are: poor planning, lack of leadership, vague/changing requirements, lifecycle problems, inadequate funding, deadlines and the like. In the last few decades, project managers have witnessed how the profession has evolved and grown to become increasingly accepted (Project Management Institute. A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge, 2017). Projects are now larger in size, with shorter duration along with even more stakeholders.

It is clear that managing and implementing projects is not an easy feat. It comes with its own challenges and hurdles so what compelled the researcher to take on this topic to research about is because when it comes to researches done on project implementation, they are mainly focused on large scale organizations. For instance, research done by (Shiferaw, 2020) focuses on challenges faced by project managers in road projects and another research by (Shehu, 2010) was also centered around the construction environment.

There is barely any research done on local NGOs which are relatively small scale, much less on a woman-based organization. The first articles on women project

managers found were published in the mid-90s, according to (Gale and Cartwright, 1995), women encounter problems gaining entry and acceptance in the project-based industries. For recent years, there is also lack of published research on women in project management. In spite of the low female representation and slow progression of women to leadership roles in project-based organizations, limited studies exist considering those issues.

Gender-specific challenges obstacles have not been completely eliminated. Project management remains a man's world. Women managers often report that they first have to assert themselves to gain acceptance and overcome the typical stereotypes. There is also a scarcity of female role models. This is partially attributable to the fact that more women than men face challenge of achieving a good work-life balance while managing a project (Womenomics: The Role of Women in Project Management, 2022).

2. Empirical Literature

A study carried out in Kenya (K'Akumu and Olima, 1999) identified that there are mainly two problems caused namely, time overruns and cost overruns. They found that the project duration was a period of great economic upheaval and the money value went up during previous years making it difficult to finance projects.

Another study made on successful project implementation by (Al Jarrah, Jarah, and Altarawneh, 2022) (a study aimed at identifying the primary aspects contributing to the project's successful implementation by considering project risk management as a mediating component), found that candidates have embraced the art of project risk management solutions to help them complete their projects successfully because successful project implementation necessitates both good project management processes.

Therefore, the emphasis of this study was on the importance of these project management processes (project start-up, planning, execution, monitoring and control, and project close) and the arts of project risk management as a mediating variable. Furthermore, the study discovers that the positive impact of project management processes (i.e., project start-up, planning, execution, tracking and control, and project completion) on successful project implementation is partially mediated by the arts of project risk management.

For this, the paper used extensive data from sample participants in recent Jordanian project managers working on a variety of projects at the Jordan Engineers Association, Jordan Construction Contractors Association, and King Abdullah Design and Development Bureau.

Agafonova (2021) stated that it is worth noting the key role in the effective implementation of projects of various directions is the use of a balanced and

reasonable system for evaluating the results of project activities. He found and concluded that it was advisable to use a system of indicators for evaluating the effectiveness of project implementation in the areas of project constraints time, resources, quality, which contributes to the timely identification of critical deviations from the budget and the project charter, as well as the adoption of operational management decisions in order to achieve the planned project results.

Amade, Achimba, Ogonna, and Kaduru (2012) identified determinants of successful project implementation in Nigeria and the results of the analysis among others show that Environmental factors are more critical to the success of project implementation than skills portfolio of the project team. Collective responsibility among project stakeholders is a necessary condition for successful project implementation; Ability of project professionals to generate accurate designs, cost and time estimates will minimize the negative effects of economic instability on successful project delivery.

3. Research Methodology

This part of the study gives detail on how the research activity is carried out. Therefore, the researcher concentrates on the methods that is adopted throughout the study to accomplish the research objectives. It includes the research design, the type of data and source of data used, data analysis and methodology.

3.1 Description of the Study Area

Young Women's Christian Association Ethiopia is a pioneer women organization that focused on young women and girls and introduced volunteerism in Ethiopia. It is an affiliate member of World Young Women's Christian Association Ethiopia (YWCA) founded in 1855 at London by young women Emma Roberts and Mary Jane Kinnaird who want to help and provide safe space for women affected by the then ongoing war in Europe. Founded on 1954 E.C (1962 G.C) in Addis Ababa by member of the female member of the royal family and interested women. First registered by the Ministry of interior and began to serve young women through several engagements and provided educational and recreational services.

In addition, Young Women's Christian Association Ethiopia (YWCA-Ethiopia) was involved in various skill programs for young girls and women. Its head office is located in Addis Ababa around 4 kilo, 2.2 km away from the Bete Mengist, 7.2 km from Friendship Park and 8.5 km from Menelik Secondary School (Figure 1).

3.2 Research Approach and Design

The research has a descriptive research design as such it follows a mixed approach of both quantitative and qualitative research approach.

Figure 1. Young Women's Christian Association Location (YWCA-Ethiopia)



Source: Own study.

3.2.1 Population and Sampling Technique

In Young Women's Christian Association, projects are carried out by the projects officers and they are aided by recruited volunteers and interns, there are also some staff members that are involved as well. In total, there are 14 active volunteers, 9 interns, 5 staff members and 7 project officers which brings the total number to 35. Since the number of the population is less than 100, the researcher took a census of the population, meaning the researcher took the entirety of the population.

3.2.2 Type and Sources of Data

For the study the researcher used both primary data and secondary data. The researcher collected the primary data from employees and volunteers by using questionnaire and interview. And the secondary data is gathered from other bodies of work such as other research papers, articles and/or books.

3.2.3 Methods of Data Collection

The researcher used both questionnaire and interview to collect research data from respondents. The quantitative analysis of this study is obtained from the filled-out questionnaire. And the qualitative analysis was taken from the open-ended questions on the questionnaire and interview conducted.

3.2.4 Methods of Data Presentation and Analysis

Descriptive statistics are brief informational coefficients that summarize a given data set, which can be a representation of the entire population or a sample of a population. The researcher used both qualitative and quantitative approach, the qualitative aspect (interview) is presented in a narrative format. And the quantitative approach (questionnaire) is represented using tables that included frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations.

4. Data Presentation and Analysis

In this section, the collected data is presented, analyzed and interpreted. The data was collected through interview and questionnaire distributed to volunteers and employees at Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA). A total of 35 questionnaires were distributed and 33 were returned which accounts 94.3 percent response rate.

4.1 Respondents' Demographic Characteristics

The study sought information on aspects of respondents' background, particularly, gender distribution, age distribution, educational level and experience of the population filling the questionnaire. Demographic characteristic is not part of part of assessment, but simply included to show respondent's information participated in the research.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Distribution	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	0
	Female	33
Age distribution	Below 20	6
	21-30	19
	31-40	7
	41-50	1
	50+	0
Marital Status	Single	27
	Married	6
	Divorced	0
	Widowed	0
Educational Background	Diploma	0
	Degree	7
	Masters	9
	Still in university	10
	Still in Highschool	7
	Some adult education	0
Position at YWCA	Volunteer	12
	Intern	9
	Project Officer	7
	Staff	5
Years of experience with YWCA	Less than a year	5
	1-3 years	24
	4- 6 years	4
	6+ years	0

Source: Primary Data, 2024.

According to result drawn in Table 1, gender distribution shows all of them to be females. YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association) is a woman led organization and although they are all for woman empowerment, they do not discriminate when hiring but at the time of this study, they did only have female employees coincidentally. The age distribution (18.2% are below the age of 20, 57.6% are 21-30, 21.2% 31-40 and 3% are above the age of 40), marital status shows that 81.8% are unmarried while the remaining 18.2% are married.

Educational level (21.2% have a bachelor's degree, 27.3% have a master's degree, 30.3% still attending university and 21.2% still attending high school). Regarding the participant's position at YWCA, majority of them are volunteers and interns with 36.4% being volunteers and 27.3% being interns, 21.2% are project officers and 15.2% are general staff. When it comes to the time each have spent at YWCA, it shows that 15.15% of them have less than a year with YWCA while 72.73% between a full year and 3 years and 12.12% of them have between 4 and 6 years with YWCA.

This shows that majority of those who work at YWCA are under the age of 30, their educational background is also quite exceptional, with the exception of volunteers, project officers and staff have either a degree or a masters degree while all volunteers and some interns are still in school.

This is because YWCA works towards the youth and as a company that introduced volunteerism to Ethiopia, they do indeed take volunteerism very seriously and are very open and eager to engage the youth in their fields. And as for the work experience with YWCA, majority of them have less than 4 years which really magnifies the high rate of turnover that exists in the organization.

4.2 Societal Challenges in Implementing Projects

The participants of the research were asked to give their opinion on the challenges encountered from society while carrying out projects. The respondents were given options on a rate of 5-point Likert's scale with 1= Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5= strongly Agree.

The collected study data was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as Frequency, Mean, Percentage and Standard Deviation as shown below in Table 2.

Where: Frequency (f) = Number of respondents for each choice provided;

Mean = Average rating given by respondents;

Percentage (%) = Percentage of respondents for each alternative (frequency in-terms of percentage);

Standard Deviation = Tells how measurements for a group are spread out from the mean.

Table 2. Societal Challenges in implementing projects

No.	Societal Challenges	Frequency (f)		Percentage	Mean	Standard Deviation
1.	The general public is very receptive to YWCA's activities	SA	6	18.2%	3.93	0.7
		A	20	60.6%		
		N	6	18.2%		
		D	1	3%		
		SD	0	0%		
		Total	33	100%		
2.	YWCA does a good job on reaching its target people	SA	12	36.4%	4.03	0.95
		A	13	39.4%		
		N	5	15.2%		
		D	3	9.1%		
		SD	0	0%		
		Total	33	100%		
3.	It's easy to smoothly implement projects	SA	1	3%	2.54	0.9
		A	4	12.1%		
		N	9	27.3%		
		D	17	51.5%		
		SD	2	6.1%		
		Total	33	100%		
4.	Duration of a project poses a challenge	SA	3	9.1%	3.54	0.79
		A	15	45.5%		
		N	12	36.4%		
		D	3	9.1%		
		SD	0	0%		
		Total	33	100%		
5.	The projects address important needs and issues	SA	17	51.5%	4.27	0.94
		A	11	33.3%		
		N	2	6.1%		
		D	3	9.1%		
		SD	0	0%		
		Total	33	100%		
6.	Goals & objectives of projects are clearly communicated to target people	SA	11	33.3%	4.09	0.76
		A	14	42.4%		
		N	8	24.3%		
		D	0	0%		
		SD	0	0%		
		Total	33	100%		
7.	Gender negatively impacts society's receptiveness and acceptability	SA	3	9.1%	3.3	0.95
		A	11	33.3%		
		N	13	39.4%		
		D	5	15.2%		
		SD	1	3%		
		Total	33	100%		

Note: SA= Strongly Agree, A= Agree, N= Neutral, D= Disagree and SD= Strongly Disagree

Source: Primary Data, 2024

As seen in Table 2 above, for the statement 'The general public is very receptive to YWCA's activities', 78.8% of the respondents agree and strongly agree and its mean value is 3.93 with standard deviation of 0.7 which shows that the general public is very receptive to YWCA's activities. For the statement 'YWCA does a good job on reaching its target people', 75.8% agrees and strongly agrees with only 9.1% disagreeing and 15.2% choosing neutral and the mean and standard deviation is 4.03 and 0.95 respectively which denotes that YWCA does do a good job at reaching its target people.

For the statement 'It's easy to smoothly implement projects', 57.6% disagreed and strongly disagreed while 27.3% were neutral and only 15.1% agreeing and strongly agreeing with a mean and standard deviation value of 2.54 and 0.9 respectively. As the mean value is less than the Likert scale 3, it indicates that it is not easy to smoothly implement projects. For the statement 'Duration of a project poses a challenge', 54.6% agreeing and strongly agreeing while 36.4% being neutral and only 9.1% disagreeing and the mean value is 3.54 and standard deviation is 0.79 which denotes duration of projects do pose a challenge.

For the statement 'The projects address important needs and issues', 84.8% agreed and strongly agreed while 9.1% disagreeing and 6.1% being neutral and the mean and standard deviation is 4.27 and 0.94 respectively indicating YWCA's projects do address important needs and issues. For the statement 'Goals & objectives of projects are clearly communicated to target people', 75.7% agreed and strongly agreed and 24.3% being neutral while none disagreed. For this, the mean and standard deviation is 4.09 and 0.76 which shows that goals and objectives of projects are clearly communicated.

For the statement 'Gender negatively impacts society's receptiveness and acceptability', 42.4% agreed and strongly agreed while 39.4% are neutral, 15.2% disagreed and 3% strongly disagreed and the mean value is 3.3 and standard deviation is 0.95 which shows that gender can negatively impact society's receptiveness and acceptability.

4.3 Stakeholder Challenges in Implementing Projects

For the statement 'Last minute changes occur fairly often' 30.3% agreed, 45.5% are neutral and 24.2% disagreed with a mean of 3.06 and standard deviation 0.74 which means, there is an agreement with the statement. For the statement 'Financial means are adequate to achieve desired goal', 9.1% strongly agreed, 18.2% agreed, 12.1% are neutral while 30.3% disagreed and 30.3% strongly disagreed and the mean and standard deviation is 2.45 and 1.34 respectively; the mean shows a value less than the Likert scale 3 which shows that financial means are not in fact adequate to achieve desired goal (Table 3).

Table 3. Stakeholder Challenges in implementing Projects

No.	Stakeholder Challenges	Frequency (f)		Percentage	Mean	Standard Deviation
1.	Officials are very cooperative	SA	1	3%	2.93	0.93
		A	10	30.3%		
		N	8	24.3%		
		D	14	42.4%		
		SD	0	0%		
		Total	33	100%		
2.	Last minute changes occur fairly often	SA	0	0%	3.06	0.74
		A	10	30.3%		
		N	15	45.5%		
		D	8	24.2%		
		SD	0	0%		
		Total	33	100%		
3.	Financial means are adequate to achieve desired goal	SA	3	9.1%	2.45	1.34
		A	6	18.2%		
		N	4	12.1%		
		D	10	30.3%		
		SD	10	30.3%		
		Total	33	100%		
4.	There is effective communication between YWCA and stakeholders	SA	7	21.3%	3.87	0.89
		A	18	54.5%		
		N	6	18.2%		
		D	1	3%		
		SD	1	3%		
		Total	33	100%		
5.	There is effective communication within YWCA	SA	6	18.2%	3.87	0.69
		A	17	51.5%		
		N	10	30.3%		
		D	0	0%		
		SD	0	0%		
		Total	33	100%		
6.	There is limited engagement of stakeholders	SA	0	0%	3.15	0.83
		A	13	39.4%		
		N	13	39.4%		
		D	6	18.2%		
		SD	1	3%		
		Total	33	100%		
7.	Gender negatively impacts cooperativeness of stakeholders	SA	1	3%	2.96	0.88
		A	8	24.3%		
		N	14	42.4%		
		D	9	27.3%		
		SD	1	3%		
		Total	33	100%		

Source: Primary Data, 2024.

For the statement 'There is effective communication between YWCA and stakeholders', 21.3% strongly agreed, 54.5% agreed, 18.2% are neutral, 3% disagreed and 3% strongly disagreed and the mean and standard deviation are 3.87 and 0.89 which indicates that there is effective communication between YWCA and stakeholders.

For the statement 'There is effective communication within YWCA', 18.2% strongly agreed, 51.5% agreed, 30.3% are neutral while none disagreed or strongly disagreed while their mean and standard deviation is 3.87 and 0.69 which points towards the existence of effective communication within YWCA. For the statement 'There is limited engagement of stakeholders', 39.4% agreed, 39.4% are neutral, 18.2% disagreed and 3% strongly disagreed their mean and standard deviation being 3.15 and 0.83 respectively which indicated the respondent's lean more towards agreement with the given statement as the value of the mean is slightly greater than the Likert value of 3.

For the statement 'Gender negatively impacts cooperativeness of stakeholders', 3% strongly agree, 24.3% agree, 42.4% are neutral, 27.3% disagree and 3% strongly disagree while having a mean value of 2.96 and standard deviation of 0.88. Given the mean value being less than the Likert value of 3, it shows general disagreement with the given statement

4.4 Organizational Challenges in Implementing Projects

As shown in Table 4, for the statement 'YWCA does a good job in motivation', 21.2% strongly agreed, 36.4% agreed, 24.2% are neutral and 18.2% disagreeing, the mean and standard deviation being 3.6 and 1.02 shows that YWCA does a good job in motivation. For the statement 'YWCA is accountable', 33.3% strongly agree, 45.5% agree, 18.2% are neutral and 3% strongly disagreeing and the mean is 4.06 and standard deviation 0.89 so this means that YWCA is accountable.

Table 4. Organizational Challenges in implementing Projects

No.	Organizational Challenges	Frequency (f)		Percentage	Mean	Standard Deviation
1.	YWCA does a good job in motivation	SA	7	21.2%	3.6	1.02
		A	12	36.4%		
		N	8	24.2%		
		D	6	18.2%		
		SD	0	0%		
		Total	33	100%		
2.	YWCA is accountable	SA	11	33.3%	4.06	0.89
		A	15	45.5%		
		N	6	18.2%		
		D	0	0%		
		SD	1	3%		
		Total	33	100%		

3.	Funding is a major problem in projects	SA	15	45.5%	4.21	0.85
		A	11	33.3%		
		N	6	18.2%		
		D	1	3%		
		SD	0	0%		
		Total	33	100%		
4.	There are abundant resources in YWCA	SA	1	3%	2.03	0.98
		A	0	0%		
		N	10	30.3%		
		D	10	30.3%		
		SD	12	36.4%		
		Total	33	100%		
5.	Project implementation process is clear and realistic	SA	3	9.1%	3.81	0.63
		A	22	66.7%		
		N	7	21.2%		
		D	1	3%		
		SD	0	0%		
		Total	33	100%		
6.	Staff number & their qualification are adequate to meet goals & objectives	SA	0	0%	2.69	1.21
		A	13	39.4%		
		N	4	12.1%		
		D	9	27.3%		
		SD	7	21.2%		
		Total	33	100%		
7.	Goals & success criteria are clear and realistic	SA	2	6.1%	3.75	0.66
		A	23	69.6%		
		N	6	18.2%		
		D	2	6.1%		
		SD	0	0%		
		Total	33	100%		
8.	Deadlines are realistic and achievable	SA	1	3%	2.96	0.88
		A	9	27.3%		
		N	11	33.3%		
		D	12	36.4%		
		SD	0	0%		
		Total	33	100%		

Source: Primary Data, 2024.

For the statement ‘Funding is a major problem in projects’, 45.5% strongly agree, 33.3% agree, 18.2% are neutral and 3% disagree and the mean value is 4.21 while the standard deviation is 0.85 which demotes that funding is a major problem in projects.

For the statement ‘There are abundant resources in YWCA’, 36.4% strongly disagree, 30.3% disagree, 30.3% being neutral while only 3% strongly agree, having a mean and standard deviation value of 2.03 and 0.98 respectively this shows that there aren’t abundant resources in YWCA.

For the statement 'Project implementation process is clear and realistic', 9.1% strongly agreed, 66.7% agreed, 21.2% are neutral and 3% disagree. The mean and standard deviation for this is 3.81 and 0.63 which indicates that project implementation process is clear and realistic. For the statement 'Staff number & their qualification are adequate to meet goals & objectives', 39.4% agree, 12.1% are neutral, 27.3% disagree and 21.2% strongly disagree and the mean and standard deviation is 2.69 and 1.21 respectively indicating staff number and their qualification are not adequate to meet goals and objectives.

For the statement 'Goals & success criteria are clear and realistic', 6.1% strongly agree, 69.6% agree, 18.2% are neutral and 6.1% disagree; the mean and standard deviation for this is 3.75 and 0.66 which shows that goals and success criteria are clear and realistic. For the statement 'Deadlines are realistic and achievable', 3% strongly disagree, 27.3% agree, 33.3% are neutral and 36.4% disagree and the mean and standard deviation value for this is 2.96 and 0.88 respectively and because the mean value is slightly smaller than the Likert value of 3, this shows a disagreement with the given statement.

The qualitative data for this research was collected through a written question to be filled along with the questionnaire and interview. The questionnaire was distributed among 35 people with 33 of them being filled out and returned and the interview was conducted on 3 volunteers and 3 project managers. Based on what the respondents shared, there are a number of challenges plaguing their project implementation phase: One of the challenges were with the case of financial resources, some of them shared that when a donor expresses their interest to donate an amount of money for a project of their choosing, rate of inflation is not taken into consideration.

Inflation rate according to (www.statista.com, n.d.) shows that the inflation rate in Ethiopia was 15.8% in 2019, 20.35% in 2020, 26.79% in 2021 and 33.94% just last year. This statistical data along with the respondents' statements denotes that from the moment donors give them the financial resource to the point of the project's completion, using up the resources efficiently and effectively possess a challenge as certain items or certain services don't have the same price as when the donation and expenditure plans were first made. This creates a wedge and variation between what was planned and what can actually be done.

Another challenge they mentioned was to do with duration of projects. In YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association) when a donor is interested in doing something in the country, they give their donation along with what aspect or area the project needs to be centered around, the areas covered by different projects can be as narrow as giving academic support to underprivileged students via summer programs and it could be as large as tackling gender-based violence and assault in the school environment.

Therefore, the scope of projects taken on by YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association) varies and each might require longer time and resources in order to carry them out properly. This shows that, some projects need more time in order to reach enough people and have a long-lasting impact and reach the project's ultimate goal and objective but because of the available resources and given the deadline set to present the deliverables, some projects are not thoroughly done. Another challenge mentioned by the participants was about engagement and support.

Respondents shared that in carrying out projects, they are bound to work with different external organizations and people as part of the implementation phase. These include, school officials, local government offices and staff from other organizations NGOs and otherwise. And the respondents shared that not all of them are that much cooperative and are rarely willing to go the extra mile to ensure certain aspects of the projects are met. Most of them only tend to fulfill the bare minimum of requirements.

Another mentioned problem actually goes hand in hand with the financial problems and cooperativeness of external support mentioned above. Some projects at YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association) require them to give training to different groups of society and after every attendance, it is a requirement to give the participants and also the helping party per-dime but given YWCA's financial limitations, they are only able to designate a small amount of money to the beneficiaries. How this poses a threat is that other bigger and far more well-established NGOs also do similar thing and since they are more capable, their per-dime rates are bigger.

In light of this, some beneficiaries and supporting groups at such events have certain expectations and YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association) doesn't quite live up to that expectation, these people will not be as cooperative and/or supportive in future activities. Some might even cease to show up. So, the financial drawback not only affect the expenditure schedule but it also has an impact on people's willingness to cooperate and give 100% of their efforts to the cause.

The other challenge is to do with the resource other than the financial, the human resource. Some of the respondents expressed that there is a very high level of turnovers at YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association) and so there is a very small number of staff and project officers. As such YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association) is forced to rely on part time volunteers and interns.

This causes a strain on the employees already working there as it increases the workload and they are not able to do as much and reach full potential in carrying out activities. There was also mention of the issue of salary which the employees found to be very small.

Along the lines of volunteers, some mentioned that they had little training and preparation going into the work required of them. They found that their unpreparedness affected their motivation and confidence in their work.

The issue of gender was also mentioned, some respondents mentioned that some external people working with YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association) exhibit inappropriate behavior towards them, this involves unwanted flirtatious behavior and comments and also not being taken seriously.

There is also the issue of Feminism. YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association) is an organization that has feminist viewpoints and some of the respondents expressed that while what they do and advocate for is very important, it can sometimes feel as though it is alienating men and so some men and even some women might not feel as though they identify with YWCA's (Young Women's Christian Association) goals and missions and that in turn affects their willingness to participate and/or cooperate in certain activities prepared by YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association).

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

In line with the objective of the study, the data collected was analysed and interpreted. Hence the study aimed to assess the challenges encountered by YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association) in carrying out their projects. In which both primary and secondary data were collected in the research. Accordingly, the data interpretation and summary of the study the researcher has concluded:

The challenges faced by YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association) in conducting their projects are come from different aspects. There is the societal aspect, the stakeholder aspect and of course the organizational aspect as well.

When it comes to the societal aspect, the issue of duration of the project was raised, the study shows that because YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association) tackles important societal issues, the time given to thoroughly imbed the values and everlasting principles of the projects' aim can be hindering in that is simply not enough at times.

Along the lines of society, the issue of gender was also observed to be a hindering aspect. YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association) is a woman led organization and they do majority of their work centres around empowering women and helping young girls reach their full potential. As such, YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association) has a very feminist view and principles.

The general public in Ethiopia is not very receptive of some of these principles as the majority find it hard to identify with them so whenever projects are being carried out and the mention of gender-based ideologies are raised most of the participants tend to be less receptive.

When it comes to the stakeholder aspect of the challenges faced by YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association), it is observed that no work is done by YWCA itself alone, they often partner with various organizations and local government offices in order to effectively and efficiently mobilize any and every resource at their disposal to make sure their project goals and aims are met. But based on the study, it is not often that these external stakeholders and potential partners are cooperative.

And things like getting letters approved or certain activities allowed can cause a hassle and last-minute changes or demands can create a big inconvenience for the project. There is also the issue of financial resource. Since YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association) is an NGO, it mainly works off of donations from donors but the challenge with this is that they often don't consider the effect of inflation and so that causes the financial resources gained simply not enough to carry out the projects efficiently and effectively.

When it comes to the organizational aspect of the challenges faced by YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association) it is the number of staff working at the organization. The study shows that there are very small number of workers and there is high turnover. This impacts their overall work as they do not have enough man power to realize the full potential of a project. And this also puts a strain on the remaining employees as there is workload.

All these challenges ultimately affect the quality and quantity of work that YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association) can do. Because of these challenges, delays happen and that causes the project to be done later than scheduled and costs financially. The lack of cooperation from various external parties also hinders YWCA from carrying out their project in an efficient and effective manner. The high turnover rate and the limited number of workers present at YWCA impacts the thoroughness of the work and is a very hindering aspect.

5.2 Recommendation

On the basis of the conclusion drawn with the various challenges faced by YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association), constructive recommendations forwarded:

- The findings of the research shows that financial aspect is indeed a problem in that the donations are rarely enough to do meaningful work. Therefore, YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association) should consider being explicit about this to potential donors. And also, they should look into

reaching more donors and philanthropists. To do this, the researcher suggests they work on their visibility. There are a number of well-known NGOs in Ethiopia that have greater number of donors and supporters and that's because people know them and their work so getting people's attention is not a problem. So, if YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association) works on mobilizing social media and such different outlets to promote themselves and all the important work they do, they would be more visible and attract more aiding people. Generally, YWCA should work towards promoting themselves and their work more extensively.

- As for the limited number of staff, although YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association) is doing a decent job at utilizing volunteers, it still seems not enough. Based on the findings of the study, there isn't any lack of motivation on YWCA's part but there is still the factor of not fully engaging and training their volunteers. In light of this, YWCA should work on having an extensive internship and volunteerism program all year round not just project specific hires but also office working staff. Because YWCA doesn't have adequate number of financial resources to drastically increase the number of employees, volunteers and interns are the best tools to work with. From the study, volunteers are very eager to work and be exposed to different experiences so there is no lack of interest on their part so YWCA should capitalize on this and consider recruiting more volunteers from schools and compensate them using other tools besides financial like, organizing trainings exclusively for them, providing them letters of recommendation and also certifying them for all the work they do. This would attract many of the youth and can potentially solve the limited number of man power that exists in YWCA.
- The other issue is to do with YWCA's feminist approach. This approach even though it aligns with the goals and mission of YWCA, is not always the best way to go about things. Many people might view the feminist agenda as a western ideology and become skeptical about it. As such, the researcher would suggest leaving the terminology and just focusing on the work and principals embedded in the terminology. Because the mere utterance of 'Feminism' might make potential collaborators, participants and potential partners alienated and hence lead to their ultimate disinterest in taking part in any of the activities.
- Finding other ways of generating financial resources is also something YWCA should look into because there is only so much donors can do. It is important that YWCA finds means of generating income to better support the organization. This can be done by preparing YWCA merchandise to be sold, offering training services to other entities, and although YWCA also has a membership program, it is important to further expand on that as the annual members' fees can be very helpful.
- Not just financial resources but YWCA should also look into companies willing to provide material aid as well. Partnerships with such companies

can have a win-win situation for both parties involved and it would take some of the financial strain off of YWCA as an organization.

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