

# THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF BUSINESS & MANAGEMENT

## Strategic Implementation within Non-governmental Organizations' Projects for Social Transformation in Dungu Sub-County, Democratic Republic of Congo

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### **Abstract:**

*Strategic implementation within non-governmental organization projects is some of the main activities implemented in Dungu Sub-County to assist the displaced victims of the Lord's Resistance Army's civil wars. However, the implementation of these projects has ignored the need to advance good education, human dignity, food security, health-care and income generation. This study sought to: assess the influence of NGO project leadership; and NGO project resources on social transformation in Dungu Sub-County, Democratic Republic of Congo. This research was anchored on transformational leadership theory and Barney's resource-based view theory. The study used a descriptive research design. The target population comprised 1600 employees working in the registered NGOs, key informants from community leaders, church leaders, and representatives of the displaced victims. The Nassiuma scientific formula was used to get the sample size of 197 respondents. The study used stratified, simple random sampling and purposive sampling. Data were analyzed through descriptive and inferential statistics, using SPSS version 25. The study found that NGO employees had a clear vision to implement strategies for better outcomes to a low extent, and there was moderation in the NGOs' recruitment and training of employees. The study concluded that there was a positive correlation between strategy implementation of NGOs projects on social transformation. Therefore, the study recommends that the NGOs' leaders have a clear vision of the projects and should recruit and train enough employees to participate in the projects' strategic implementation for social transformation.*

**Keywords:** Strategic implementation, project leadership, project resources, social transformation

### **1. Introduction**

Social transformation, which is concerned with the enhancement of quality of life, seeks to spur transformative change across the dimensions of inclusive, sustained, and sustainable growth (Pierli & Selvam, 2017). It entails reorganizing all parts of life, including culture and social interactions, politics and the economy, and one's style of thinking and living (Rabie, 2013). Therefore, social protection, economic growth, and employment policies must act in tandem to ensure that poverty can be alleviated and the people's living standards enhanced. According to the World Bank (2013), increased support for social change can significantly enhance the lives of the poor and disadvantaged.

The social transformation changes are sometimes motivated by crises, political environment, or recognition of an urgency to act. They also involve a more ambitious scope, higher risks, longer time frames, and multiple instruments. Nevertheless, these social transformation changes may produce effects that can result in far-reaching impacts or even shift the world to a higher, more sustainable development path (World Bank, 2013). Poverty alleviation strategies involve providing education, funding for income generation, and health to socially transform the livelihoods of the poor by internationally approved organizations or the government. Such humanitarian organizations also aim to eliminate legal and social barriers to income growth among the people. Therefore, programs for poverty alleviation depend on correctly identifying the poor.

In addition, these transformational engagements may not be identifiable based on forecasts but rather on actual results. This is because transformation may not actually be apparent until after the completion of a project. Organizations, therefore, need to understand the type of poverty experienced by the people to know the strategic approaches to use in order to alleviate poverty. Lorette (2018) posits that Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) should consider strategic

implementation as critical to their success as it addresses the who, where, when, and how of reaching the desired objectives and goals in terms of social transformation.

Globally, in terms of development, NGOs serve four important roles. The development function is the first, focusing on small-scale humanitarian programs in collaboration with local people. The second function is empowerment, which entails involving local communities in developing aid initiatives and lobbying. Another duty of NGOs in development is education, which includes providing educational materials for schools and advertising to keep global development issues in the public eye. The most recent function of NGOs is emergency aid, in which they are on the front lines of emergency help delivery (Nikkah & Redzuan, 2017).

World Bank (2013) posited that a community's need for social transformation might be motivated by crises arising from conflicts. Various poverty alleviation projects undertaken in such communities mostly depend on correctly identifying those whose livelihoods need to be transformed. As such, the concept of NGOs is acknowledged as a major third sector actor in such landscapes that require human rights, humanitarian action, and development (Lewis, 2010). NGOs, therefore, provide services to those in need, participate in policy advocacy, and run public campaigns in the name of social change. They collaborate on poverty alleviation project activities or initiatives with the government, donors, and the commercial sector (Rabie, 2013).

The roots of NGOs could be traced back to the charity services of the monasteries in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, whose aim was to address specific social needs. However, from 1840-1890s, they started acting as philanthropic organizations to address at a small scale the dramatic social situations created by the new phenomenon of industrialization and free trade. According to Folger (2020), an NGO is organized on community, national and international levels to respond to specific problems. They work not only in terms of the funds they channel but also in terms of their number, their spread throughout the world, and their contribution to transforming people's livelihoods.

In terms of structure, NGOs might be large or small, official or informal, bureaucratic or flexible. Many non-governmental organizations (NGOs) obtain funding from outside sources, while others rely on locally organized resources (Rabie, 2013). Visible leadership, resources, operations, market, work environment, and partners are all important aspects of strategic execution. Having the right people with the right skills, adequate resources, a communicative organizational structure, appropriate technology, and a work environment culture that motivates employees to perform well are all necessary elements for NGOs and other organizations to successfully manage their projects (Lorette, 2018).

In Africa, in the process of enhancing social transformation through poverty eradication in developing countries, NGOs have been engaging in promoting solidarity and cooperation with the poorest countries in the world through actions and projects (Dahie, 2019). A study carried out by Hussaini (2014) in Nigeria noted that, despite various poverty alleviation projects undertaken by NGOs, they have not effectively transformed the livelihoods of the poor due to poor strategic implementation practices. This has resulted from lacking a clearly defined policy framework, poor governance, inadequate resources, political interference, distasteful looting, and unclear structures.

The violence in the Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo has triggered a critical societal transformation process. The devastating humanitarian implications of this ten-year conflict must not be overlooked. Indeed, the conflict in Eastern DRC has resulted in one of the worst humanitarian disasters since World War II. More than 3 million Congolese have died as a direct or indirect result of this armed antagonism, which has involved over six African countries and more than a dozen rebel factions (Rufanges & Aspa, 2016). Many sections of the DRC have experienced the conflict for at least two decades. The country's military conflicts began in the early 1990s, when the Rwandan genocide resulted in a massive influx of refugees into the Democratic Republic of Congo. The influx exacerbated ethnic tensions within the country and between natives and refugees, resulting in the outbreak of a regional war in 1996.

The increasing struggle for access to land and natural resources has been the fundamental driver of the social transformation process in the Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. Land rivalry has been the most visible in Masisi, where a dispute occurred in 1993 over insufficient access to arable and grazing land between the local Banyarwanda, Banyanga, and Bahunde groups. In addition, in other parts of Eastern DRC, the armed fight for economic assets is gradually being portrayed in ethnic terms (Rufanges & Aspa, 2016). Almost every step of the DRC peace process has been marked by the engagement of external actors who have played key roles that have been both helpful and detrimental.

In DRC, despite being a rich country in terms of natural resources, its citizens are among the poorest (Giuliani, 2014). NGOs have mushroomed and gained significance in poverty alleviation projects due to the repetitive civil wars experienced in South Sudan and Uganda. The NGOs in DRC are involved in diverse domains of society and claim to work towards transforming the people's livelihoods. According to the World Bank (2021), poverty in DRC is multi-dimensional, complex, and unique. The characteristics of poverty seem to revolve around lack of peace and security, a culture of impunity, basic life needs not being met, and collapse of basic life needs.

Therefore, 73% of the population of the Democratic Republic of Congo lives on less than \$1.9 a day (World Bank, 2021). As poor governance has limited the access to basic needs for the communities, they have resolved to partner with NGOs and Churches to initiatives for survival strategies to fight poverty. However, the NGOs' effectiveness in alleviating poverty to transform people's lives socially depends on the environment created by the government.

A study by Mukongo and Awolusi (2019) evaluated the impact of strategy implementation in DRC by specifically looking at the influence of leadership and resources. The study discovered a leadership deficit at all levels of society, affecting people's social transformation. The study also discovered that the leaders lacked critical qualities that ensured people's well-being. Another result was that instability was generated by mismanagement of available resources, which led to the formation of armed organizations. According to the report, institutions should support strong, committed leadership and create a vision that may affect people's lives (Mukongo & Awolusi, 2019).

Another study by Lobron et al. (2019) which focused on strategic implementation and its impact on poverty alleviation in DRC, specifically looked at project structure development. The results revealed that local institutions' lack of capacity building in designing appropriate structures to implement their projects affected poverty alleviation in DRC. The study suggested that local institutions should consult foreign experts in designing structures to enhance the success of poverty alleviation projects.

Fangwa et al. (2019) examined the effectiveness of strategy implementation by NGOs on social impact in the DRC. The study looked at the effectiveness of governance structures in health-care programs in particular. According to the findings, better governance leads to increased operational efficiency and greater social performance. Another finding was that donor finance was not a substitute for governance because, without efficiency, a social transformation would be impossible. According to the findings, corporate governance played a critical role in accomplishing non-profits' goals and boosting the social effect of donor contributions (Fangwa et al., 2019).

This research, therefore, sought to establish the strategic implementation of NGO projects for social transformation in Dungu Sub-County, Democratic Republic of Congo. The study examined how NGO project leadership and NGO project resources influence social transformation in Dungu Sub-County, DRC.

### 1.1. Statement of the Problem

Despite being a wealthy country regarding natural resources, the DRC has the world's third biggest number of destitute people. According to the World Bank (2018), poverty in the DRC and Dungu Sub-County is widespread and persistent, with 73 percent of its population living on less than \$1.9 a day. One in every six persons in the DRC lives in extreme poverty. In an endeavor to socially transform the lives of displaced victims of LRA civil wars in Dungu Sub-County, NGOs engage in various poverty alleviation projects.

According to the World Bank (2018), poverty in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is widespread and persistent, with 73 percent of its population living on less than \$1.9 a day. Residents of Dungu Sub-County are included in this. As a result, one in every six persons in the DRC lives in extreme poverty. The measure suggests that health (48.2%), literacy (48.4%), birth expectancy (40%), and deprivation intensity (40%) are the most critical factors (53.7 percent). This indicates that social transformation initiatives undertaken by NGOs in Dungu County are crucial as they could assist in eradicating poverty.

Studies reviewed focused on strategy implementation by NGOs under different contexts:

- In Pakistan (Khan et al., 2019),
- In Philippines (Ravelo, 2018);
- In Nigeria (Hussaini, 2014); and
- In Kenya (Itumo, 2015)

These studies established that strategy implementation in terms of policies, funding, leadership, governance, and social security, were crucial for effective social transformation. In addition, previous research methodologies also differed in structural equation modeling, while Hosseinpour and Tabari (2016) used a pre-designed questionnaire. This research attempted to fill this gap by examining the strategic implementation of non-governmental organizations' projects for social transformation in Dungu Sub-County, in DRC. Different dimensions of NGO project leadership, NGO project structure, NGO project resources and NGO donor policy were examined to conceptualize the study.

### 1.2. Research Objectives

The specific objectives for this research were:

- To assess the influence of NGO project leadership on social transformation in Dungu Sub-County, Democratic Republic of Congo
- To establish the influence of NGO project resources on social transformation in Dungu Sub-County, Democratic Republic of Congo

### 1.3. Research Hypothesis

- H<sub>0</sub>1: There is no significant relationship between NGO leadership and social transformation in Dungu Sub-County, DRC
- H<sub>0</sub>2: There is no significant relationship between NGO project resources and social transformation in Dungu Sub-County, DRC

## 2. Theoretical Framework

### 2.1. Transformational Leadership Theory

The transformational leadership theory was first suggested by Burns (1978), Bass (1985, 1998), and Yukl (1999) to prove leaders with strong motivational relationships with their followers or subordinates. Transformational leadership is a purposeful, moral, and spiritual process that establishes connections between leaders and followers to reach a common aim or actual change (Korejan & Shahbazi, 2016). Transformational leadership entails gaining subordinates' commitment to business goals and empowering them to realize them. Followers of transformational leadership are aided and encouraged to develop their creativity and self-actualization. It affects positive organizational change and gives managers and employees a fresh perspective (Arabiun et al., 2014). Transformational leadership is a dynamic process that allows leaders to shape their followers' values, beliefs, and goals. They steer organizations in the right direction and help

followers or employees see possible opportunities and the need to develop new strategies for resource efficiency (Avarsin et al., 2012).

From the perspective of Bass and Avalor (1985), idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized considerations are the four main characteristics of transformational leadership (Hoffmeister et al., 2012). As a result, inspiring and motivating leaders push their people to work harder and present a clear vision for attaining their objectives. The leader engages with his or her followers to determine their individual traits and abilities through individual consideration. By modifying their strategies and opportunities, leaders inspire their followers to seek to instill excitement and innovation in their subordinates. They allow for the free flow of ideas and imaginations and become role models for their followers regarding admiration, respect, and trust. They are more concerned about their followers' needs (Deveshvar, 2014).

The transformational leadership theory has been criticized for placing too much focus on the leader's transformational qualities, promoting the idea that the chief executive officer is the source of leadership in an organization. The underlying influence processes for transformational and transactional leadership are similarly ambiguous in the theory, which is considered a flaw (Yukl, 1999). The theory is consistent with sharing leadership with other stakeholders and does not assume that an organization's leadership will be the only leadership. There is also the unpredictability of transformational leadership, as different types of leadership will emerge in different situations.

This theory was applicable in the situation of NGOs. They are implementing poverty alleviation projects in Dungu Sub-County as it would guide the leaders in assessing the expected outcomes and adopting a transformational leadership style to inspire their subordinates by articulating a clear and compelling vision for better results. The theory was also relevant because the NGOs leaders used it to influence and delegate some responsibilities to coworkers, community leaders, or church leaders to socially transform the livelihoods of the LRA victims by guiding the implementation of strategies.

## 2.2. Resource Based View (RBV) Theory

Barney conceptualized Resource Based View theory in 1991. This theory postulates the need for an institution to find the sources of aggressive gain from within. This includes tangible and intangible. Tangible assets comprise the physical things owned by the organization, namely buildings, equipment, land, and capital. Further, intangible resources encompass all that has no physical aspect but still can be owned by the organization (Jurevicius, 2013). The theory clarified that resources must be diverse and steady (Hung & Ma, 2012).

An organization should therefore strive to have tangible such as physical items, which comprise buildings, cash, equipment, and intangible resources, which include goodwill, trademarks, and brand recognition which are rare, thus having no competitive parity. Thus, these resources will be valuable, ensuring no competitive disadvantage. Further, the tangible and intangible resources of the business should be made difficult for competitors to substitute (Jurevicius, 2013).

RBV theory has been criticized in several ways. Firstly, its main center of attention is to investigate which resources satisfy the criteria for sustainable competitive advantage without questioning how the organization possesses or creates the resources. Secondly, the theory does not fulfill the dimensions of the bond between an organization's performance and strategic resources. Thus, it ignores other market dominance aspects like brand recognition, technology behavior, or cost leadership (Hung & Ma, 2012).

The theory was relevant to this study because it revealed that NGOs should strive to use their project resources like human resources, financial resources, and physical resources to strategically implement their activities for social transformation. In addition, the NGOs would also use other heterogeneous outputs that are unique to their organizations to enable them to have a greater impact on projects for social transformation. This would lead to the social transformation of the displaced LRA victims in Dungu Sub-County. The theory was also relevant because it showed how NGOs would use their intangible resources to get more project resources from donors to strategically implement more projects.

## 3. Literature Review

### 3.1. NGO Project Leadership and Social Transformation

In Turkey, Cakir and Adiguzel (2020) examined the link between leadership and organizational success. The study discovered that leader effectiveness and knowledge sharing positively impacted performance. According to the study, to boost organizational efficiency, team members should be kept informed and given the opportunity to submit feedback regularly. Another proposal was that to improve leadership effectiveness, firms should endeavor to improve organizational adaptation and employee perceptions of leadership personalities, as well as psychological empowerment. In Malaysia, Simin et al. (2015) conducted a study to identify the characteristics of leaders that impact social transformation. The findings showed that the personality traits of a leader and leadership structure were effective in implementing development projects. The study recommended that mindfulness of concern, initiative and commitment should be of great importance for leaders involved in implementing poverty alleviation projects (Simin et al., 2015).

Similarly, Danisman et al. (2015) investigated the effect of leadership on project performance in Turkey. According to the random effect model research, leadership has a medium-level effect on project output. Only leadership style/approach and publishing year were identified as moderator variables, despite the fact that sample group /sector, publication type, and publication year were all identified as moderator variables. The study recommended that organizations should adopt the most appropriate leadership style to guide project implementation as this would produce better outputs. Further, Kitonga (2017) conducted a study in Nairobi on leadership and organizational concert practices in non-profit organizations. The goal of the study was to see how strategic direction, human capital, ethical

behaviors, and strategic control affected organizational coordination. According to the study, human capital increased non-profit companies' strategic leadership practices and organizational concert. According to the findings, leaders should embody crucial strategic skills, knowledge, and attitude to build human capital and enable thriving businesses to achieve their vision and goals.

Shembe (2014) assessed the role of traditional leaders in social transformation within Thekwini Municipality in South Africa. According to the findings of the study, traditional leaders were not playing a substantial role in social reform because they did not sit on the municipality's top decision-making body. The findings also revealed that the leaders were only consulted when the project was to be executed in their districts rather than contributing to budget formulation and project planning. In order to offer clarity on the roles of leaders within the municipality, the study proposed amending the Constitution and relevant leadership legislation. The study also suggested that leadership be more involved in budgeting, project planning, project implementation, and annual review processes. In addition, Igbaekemen and Odivwri (2015) explored the link between leadership and social transformation in Nigeria. According to the study, leadership significantly impacts project staff performance, and participative leadership approaches helped project beneficiaries perform better. It was also determined that the employee had been given effective delegation of power and responsibility, which aided in the strategy's implementation. Because of the benefits that democratic or participative leadership would provide to employees and other stakeholders, the study determined that it was the best of all leadership styles. The study concluded that to improve performance, it was necessary to adjust the impact of leadership when the need arose in an organization.

### 3.2. NGO Project Resources and Social Transformation

Rehman et al. (2019) studied the link between organization resources and organizational projects in Pakistan. The study established that organizational resources played a critical role in the outcome of an organization's projects. The study further noted how human resources treated and compensated in the organization affected the success of the projects. Another finding was that having financial controls enhanced the effectiveness of projects. Therefore, the study recommended that:

- Ensure it has control systems for planning purposes, as this would streamline the financial operations and
- Ensure that only the required number of employees is employed.

This would translate to efficiency in the implementation of projects.

Chakraborty et al. (2019) examined the importance of human resources in poverty reduction. The study noted that the analysis of the conditions of poverty and the production process needs to expand. The study found that though developing countries perceive commendable economic progress, many poor people reside in these countries. The study recommended that the capabilities of common people should be enhanced. The research also recommended that human resources capabilities were substantial in the poverty reduction measures.

Similarly, Tashman and Marano (2010) looked at the implications of the resource-based view on poverty alleviation projects in Portland, Oregon. The study analyzed the abilities to enhance strategic capabilities as a dynamic. In Kenya, Gitahi and K'Obonyo (2018) carried out a study to review specific dimensions of physical facilities, technology, human resources, and finances. The results revealed that organizational resources significantly affect organizational performance. The study recommended that an organization with appropriate resources can achieve its desired performance, and thus, organizations should endeavor to ensure that they have them.

In addition, Mwai et al. (2018) focused on a study to inspect the impact of capital on NGOs' efficiency in Kenya. The study showed efforts to raise funds and their distribution to implement activities. The findings revealed the influence of empowerment on project implementation. The study recommended that NGOs be classified into groups grounded on the effectiveness of achieving various perspectives.

### 3.3. Conceptual Framework

The study was guided by the following conceptual framework.

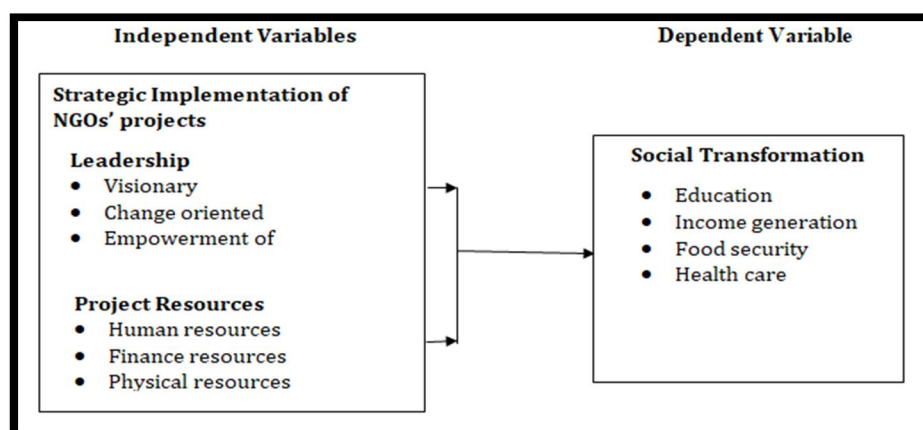


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework  
Source: Adopted from Literature Review

Figure 1 demonstrates that the strategic implementation of NGOs' projects influences social transformation. The leadership that is visionary and change-oriented works toward the empowerment of beneficiaries for social transformation. Having visionary leadership would enable the NGOs to influence the displaced victims' education, income generation, food security, and health-care initiatives, thus ensuring their livelihoods are transformed. Change-oriented leadership would ensure that the available project resources are effectively utilized to fund the projects for the displaced victims to eradicate poverty. Further, empowering the beneficiaries by the leaders would ensure that they are actively involved in the NGO projects and know the structures used to improve initiatives such as health care and income-generating activities for better livelihoods. NGO project resources include human resources to implement the strategies, financial resources, and physical resources. By ensuring that the NGOs have adequate employees to carry out the various activities per project, they would be able to socially transform the livelihoods of the displaced victims. This is because the projects on education, income generation, food security, and health care would be completed on time. In addition, when the available financial resources are effectively utilized, and the NGO employees can raise more funds, more projects can be implemented, thus eradicating poverty.

#### 4. Methodology

The descriptive research design was adopted in this study. According to McCombes (2020), the descriptive research design is beneficial because it allows for the use of a wide variety of research methods for data collection, provides thorough information since the data collected is qualitative and quantitative, and provides high-quality data. The target population for this research comprised of employees working in all the 10 registered NGOs involved in poverty alleviation in Dungu Sub-County, representatives of the war victims, church leaders, and community leaders. The study utilized the Nassiuma (2000) formula to calculate the sample size of 197 respondents. This study used stratified, simple random, and purposive sampling methods. In addition, this study used a semi-structured questionnaire to collect data from the NGO employees.

In contrast, expert purposive sampling was used to select the key informants from the community leaders and Church leaders based on their knowledge and involvement in the poverty alleviation projects being undertaken by the registered NGOs in Dungu Sub-County for interviews. As for the displaced victims, the researcher divided them into three focus groups of 10 displaced victims each for group discussions. Analysis of data gathered was realized through the use of the Software Package for Social Science (SPSS Version 25.0). The descriptive statistics used were the frequencies, while inferential statistics were used through Pearson correlation analysis. After that, simple tabulation and arrangement of responses in frequency tables were utilized to present the research findings, while different charts were also used to show distributions.

#### 5. Findings and Discussion

##### 5.1. NGO Project Leadership

The first objective of the study was to assess the influence of NGO project leadership on social transformation in Dungu Sub-County, DRC, and the results are presented below:

Items	Mean	SD
The NGOs' leaders have a clear vision of projects being undertaken to enhance the social transformation	2.39	1.097
The NGOs' leaders try to promote the exploration of new and better ways of implementing strategies for a better outcome	2.87	0.884
The NGOs' leaders are willing to work towards a better future for the LRA victims	2.99	0.957
The NGOs' leaders share with employees the vision of transforming the livelihoods of displaced victims	3.33	1.019
The NGOs' leaders encourage the participation of the beneficiaries in the poverty alleviation projects	2.65	0.984
The NGOs' leaders empower the project beneficiaries to ensure they actively take part in transforming their livelihoods	3.15	0.904
Composite Mean	2.90	0.974

Table 1: NGO Project Leadership

Table 1 shows that the registered NGOs' employee's respondents with an M= 2.39 and SD =1.097 indicated that the NGOs' leaders had a clear vision of projects being undertaken to enhance social transformation to a low extent. At the same time, the respondents with an M= 2.87 and SD= 0.884 also indicated that the NGOs' leaders tried to promote exploration of new and better ways of implementing strategies for a better outcome to a low extent. In addition, the respondents with an M= 2.99 and SD= 957 indicated that the NGOs' leaders were willing to work towards a better future for the LRA victims to a low extent. In contrast, the respondents with an M= 3.33 and SD= 1.019 indicated that the NGOs' leaders share with employees the vision of transforming the livelihoods of displaced victims to a moderate extent. Further, the respondents with an M= 2.65 and SD= 0.894 indicated that the NGOs' leaders encouraged the participation of the beneficiaries in the poverty alleviation projects to a low extent. In contrast, the respondents with an M= 3.15 and SD=

0.904 indicated that the NGOs' leaders empowered the project beneficiaries to ensure they actively took part in transforming their livelihoods to a low extent.

A composite mean of 2.90 and standard deviation of 0.974 implies that the registered NGOs' employees felt that the project leadership was below expectation as they did not seem to have a clear vision for the implementation of the project or manage to effectively work towards a better future for the displaced victims. The findings also imply that the leaders do not fully share with the employees the project vision or encourage the participation of beneficiaries in the implementation of the projects.

These findings could be attributed to aspects such as the level of education and experience of the leaders, which are crucial in managing the NGOs. Therefore, leaders should design the environment for innovation and entrepreneurial activity. In addition, as noted by the transformational leadership theory, leaders and followers need to establish connections to reach a common aim or actual change (Korejan & Shahbazi, 2016).

The researcher sought the opinions of the key informants on the influence of NGO project leadership on social transformation in the Dungu Sub-County, and the results are presented as follows:

To find out how the NGOs' leadership was undertaken, the key informants were asked to explain how the NGOs' leaders allowed the displaced victims to participate in the projects. The key informants explained that there was no clear planning or guidance by the NGOs' leaders on the role the displaced victims played in the project implementation. They further explained that it was on a needs basis when some representatives from the displaced victims were invited to take part in an activity of the project. This indicates that there was some dissatisfaction with how the management of the NGOs was leading the strategic implementation of poverty alleviation projects.

KI 1, who was interviewed on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2021, pointed out that:

*'There is no proper schedule of activities that shows which role should be played by the displaced victims in the implementation of the poverty alleviation projects. The leaders randomly choose who can participate in an activity based on a need.'*

This depicts that the expected encouragement by the NGO leaders to have the project beneficiaries participate in the implementation of projects was not fully felt among the displaced victims' communities in Dungu Sub-County. This is in tandem with Diaz and Mazuera (2014). They established that leaders should specialize both in the nature and the boundaries of the projects that could positively impact the projects and lead to social innovation for both the projects and society. This is because transformational leaders should stimulate followers.

It was also important for the researcher to discover the changes that had been witnessed in the livelihoods of the displaced victims involved in implementing NGO projects. One key informant explained that the displaced victims who got a chance to participate in the implementation of the projects benefited as they got firsthand information and skills that they could use in their projects to enhance social transformation.

KI2, who was part of the focus group discussions carried out on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2021, stated that:

*'I have personally been privileged to have been selected to participate in implementing a food security project. This experience enabled me to gain skills that I later used to come up with and manage my small farm. This has enabled me to get adequate food for my family and sell the rest to my neighbors to get an income. Therefore, taking part in this project changed my life for the better.'*

This indicates that a positive change has been witnessed among the displaced victims who got involved in implementing NGO projects in Dungu Sub-County. The results conform to those of Cakir and Adiguzel (2020), who noted that leader knowledge sharing had a positive impact on performance. The findings also align with those of Igbaekemen and Odiwri (2015). They established that good delegation of power and responsibility enhances effective strategy implementation and hence helps to improve performance among project beneficiaries. Further, the transformational leadership theory posits that leadership is a dynamic process that allows leaders to shape their followers' values, beliefs, and goals. It also enables followers to see possible opportunities and the need to develop new strategies for resource efficiency.

As the researcher looked for information on how NGO leaders influence social transformation, the key informants were asked to explain how the leaders empowered the community members to ensure continuity in managing their projects in Dungu Sub-County. For example, one key informant explained that the NGO employees managed the poverty alleviation projects and did not seem keen to mentor the displaced victims for continuity of the projects. This is because the displaced victims were unaware of the timelines for the activities being undertaken or the role they were meant to play.

KI3, who was interviewed on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2021, stated that:

*'There is very minimal empowerment by the NGO leaders as they only seem to work closely with their employees. As a result, the displaced victims are not informed on what they should do to continue managing the projects as the NGO employees seem to be in charge of everything.'*

This implies that the NGOs leaders have not taken the necessary action to ensure that the displaced victims can effectively manage the initiated projects for social transformation after their exit. This is contradicted by Gabbar et al. (2014), who found that leaders should design the environment for innovation and entrepreneurial activity. In addition, a study by Shembe (2014) noted that all project stakeholders needed to be more involved in budgetary processes, project planning, project implementation, and annual review processes. The findings are therefore contradicted by Ravelo (2018), who posited that NGOs should work together with indigenous people to socially transform the livelihoods of the poor through good governance, consolidation of resources, and effective structures.

### 5.2. Correlation Matrix for NGO Project Leadership

The coefficient correlation matrix for the NGO project leadership and social transformation variables is shown in Table 2.

Social Transformation	NGO Project Leadership	
	Pearson Correlation	.537(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	190

Table 2: Correlation Matrix for Project Leadership and Social Transformation

\*\* Correlation Is Significant at the 0.01 Level (2-tailed)

There is a positive association between NGO project leadership and social transformation, as seen in Table 2. This is demonstrated by correlation analysis, which revealed a substantial link ( $r=0.537^{**}$ ,  $p>0.05$ ) between NGO project leadership and social transformation. These findings are backed up by those of Igbaekemen and Odivwri (2015), who found that leadership significantly impacted project personnel performance. Furthermore, Cakir and Adiguzel (2020) found that the efficacy of leaders and knowledge exchange had a beneficial impact on performance. NGO project structure also constituted an objective of this study. The results are presented in the following section.

### 5.3. NGO Project Resources

The second objective was to establish the influence of NGO project resources on social transformation in Dungu Sub-County, DRC. The data obtained were statistically analyzed, and the results are presented in Table 3.

Items	Mean	SD
The NGOs recruit and train enough employees to assist in project activities	3.46	1.022
The NGOs train their employees to enhance their skill development for enhanced social transformation of displaced victims	2.95	1.017
The NGOs attract funds to be used for project activities and social transformation of the community	3.14	1.050
The NGOs budget and adequately use the funds received to implement strategies for enhanced social transformation	3.08	1.161
There are adequate facilities to be used by the NGOs for project activities that socially transform the displaced victims' livelihoods	3.15	0.608
There are adequate equipment available for the NGOs to use	2.88	1.116
Composite Mean	3.11	0.996

Table 3: NGO Project Resources

According to Table 3, the respondents of the employees of the registered NGOs' with an  $M= 3.46$  and  $SD= 1.022$  indicated that the NGOs recruit and train enough employees to assist in project activities to a moderate extent. In contrast, the respondents with an  $M= 2.95$  and  $SD= 1.017$  indicated that the NGOs train their employees to enhance their skill development for enhanced social transformation of displaced victims to a low extent. In addition, the respondents of the employees of the registered NGOs' with an  $M= 3.14$  and  $SD = 1.161$  indicated that the NGOs attract funds to be used for project activities and social transformation of the community to a moderate extent. In contrast, the respondents with an  $M= 3.08$  and  $SD= 1.161$  indicated that the NGOs budget and adequately use the funds received to implement strategies for enhanced social transformation to a moderate extent.

Further, the employees' respondents with an  $M= 3.15$  and  $SD= 0.608$  indicated that the NGOs could use adequate facilities for project activities that socially transform the displaced victims' livelihoods to a moderate extent. In contrast, the respondents with an  $M= 2.88$  and  $SD= 1.116$  indicated that adequate equipment were available for the NGOs to use to a low extent. A composite mean of 3.11 and a standard deviation of 0.996 show that:

- The NGOs moderately recruit employees to implement projects for social transformation, and
- The employees are rarely trained to improve their skills.

The findings also indicate that the NGOs can moderately attract funds and budget them to enhance displaced victims' social transformation. According to the findings, the NGOs have inadequate equipment to carry out their projects effectively.

These findings are supported by those of Mahmoud (2020), who established that capacity-building interventions for enhancing skills should be encouraged to enhance performance. In addition, Mwai et al. (2018) found that efforts to raise funds and their distribution to implement activities enhance project outcomes. The findings are also supported by the RBV theory. It posits that an organization should strive to have tangible such as physical items, which comprise buildings, cash, equipment, and intangible resources, which include goodwill, trademarks, and brand recognition which are rare, to gain a competitive advantage (Jurevicius, 2013).



#### 5.4. Correlation Matrix for NGO Project Resources

The coefficient correlation matrix for the NGO project resources and social transformation variables is shown in Table 4.

Social Transformation	NGO Project Resources	
	Pearson Correlation	.372(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	190

Table 4: Correlation Matrix for Project Resources and Social Transformation

\*\* Correlation Is Significant at the 0.01 Level (2-tailed)

There is a favorable association between NGO project resources and social transformation, as seen in Table 4. This is demonstrated by correlation analysis, which revealed a substantial link ( $r=0.372^{**}$ ,  $p>0.05$ ) between NGO project resources and societal transformation. The findings are in tandem with those of Gitahi and K'Obonyo (2018), which revealed that organizational resources significantly affect performance. NGO Donor policy was the intervening variable in this study, and the results are presented in the following section.

#### 5.5. Hypothesis

A summary of the study hypotheses is presented in Table 5.

SN.	Hypothesis	Rule	p-value	Remarks
Ho1	There is no significant relationship between NGO leadership and social transformation in Dungu Sub-County, DRC	$r=0.537^{**}$ $p=0.000$	$p>0.000$	Rejected
Ho2	There is no significant relationship between NGO project resources and social transformation in Dungu Sub-County, DRC	$r=0.372^{**}$ $p<0.000$	$p<0.000$	Rejected

Table 5: Summary of Hypotheses

The above statements demonstrate that all the two independent variables determine the social transformation of LRA victims in Dungu Sub-County. The research, therefore, rejected the first and second hypotheses by stating that:

- There is no significant relationship between NGO leadership and social transformation in Dungu Sub-County, DRC, and
- There is no significant relationship between NGO project resources and social transformation in Dungu Sub-County, DRC.

## 6. Conclusion and Recommendations

### 6.1. Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that poor NGO project leadership is among the impediments to the effective strategic implementation of poverty alleviation projects for the social transformation of LRA displaced victims in Dungu Sub-County. This has led to a situation where the employees lack a clear vision of what the project outcomes are, and members of the LRA displaced communities are not fully empowered to actively take part in transforming their livelihoods. The fact that the NGOs leaders do not promote the exploration of new and better ways of implementing strategies has caused a limitation on the employees to be more innovative and motivated to give their best in implementing strategies for social transformation.

The study further concludes that an inadequate number of employees recruited by the NGOs for the implementation of poverty alleviation projects, coupled with insufficient skills, has affected the social transformation of LRA displaced victims. The study also concludes that the inadequacy of the NGOs to appropriately use the funds received for poverty alleviation projects negatively influences social transformation. Further, inadequate facilities and equipment for strategic implementation have led to delays in the completion of the projects, which could transform the livelihoods of the LRA displaced victims.

### 6.2. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, various recommendations were made on the way forward for the strategy implementation of poverty alleviation projects and social transformation. Regarding NGO project leadership, the study recommends that the NGOs' leaders have a clear vision of the projects being implemented for enhanced social transformation of displaced victims. It is also recommended that the NGOs' leaders promote the exploration of new and better strategy implementation methods by inspiring their employees to be more innovative for better project outcomes. Another recommendation is that the NGOs' leaders should encourage the participation of the project beneficiaries so they can actively participate in transforming their livelihoods.

Concerning project resources, the study recommends that the NGOs ensure that they recruit enough personnel to take part in the implementation of strategies for social transformation. It is also recommended that the employees should

be regularly trained to ensure that there is no skill gap. This study also recommends that the funds received from donors for poverty alleviation projects should be adequately used for such projects only. The study further recommends that NGOs acquire adequate facilities and equipment for the strategic implementation of poverty alleviation projects to avoid delays in the completion of the projects.

Similar studies should be replicated in other regions in DRC to assess how NGOs in those areas are advancing the strategic implementation of projects for social transformation.

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