

Private sector engagement in humanitarian aid projects in Kenya**Dr Catherine W. Nyambura***University of Nairobi, Kenya*

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Prof. Charles M. Rambo*University of Nairobi, Kenya***Prof. Raphael O. Nyonje***University of Nairobi, Kenya***Abstract**

Private sector engagement in humanitarian aid projects during disasters is critical to response and saving lives. Consequently, they are key players in the humanitarian field as many organizations in disaster relief sought their goods and services in efforts to be effective in their response. Consequently, it is important to create collaborations so as to continue responding to the global frequent and complex disasters. In Kenya, humanitarian crises have occurred in the form of recurrent drought, floods, malnutrition and food security, disease outbreak, post election violence; resource based inter-communal conflicts as well as terror attacks. The objective of this study was to examine private sector engagement and the implementation of humanitarian aid projects. The study focused on for areas where private sector offer services; logistics, technology and finance. The paradigm guiding the study was pragmatism and the study employed a cross sectional-survey design. The sample was drawn from NGOs in disaster relief programmes using both probability and non-probability sampling technique. Primary data was collected using self administered questionnaires, Key Informant Interview and Focus Group Discussions Guides. Questionnaires issued were 117 out of these, 85 which is 72.6% were returned for analysis. The data was analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. For descriptive analysis, mean, percentages and frequencies were used. For inferential analysis, correlations and regressions were used. For $p < 0.05$, H_0 was rejected and H_1 accepted. For the strength of the relationships, r values were considered where: $+0.10 < r < +0.29$; weak correlation $+0.30 < r < +0.49$; moderate correlation $+0.5 < r < +1.0$; Strong correlation. According to the study findings, private sector engagement influences on implementation of humanitarian aid projects in Kenya. The study concludes that private sector engagement is critical in implementation of humanitarian aid projects and there is need to put more emphasis on collaboration. The study recommended that there is need for Organizations in disaster relief to adopt more areas of expertise from the private sector for better implementation.

Introduction

Private Sector has been playing a great role in humanitarian aid project implementation during disasters, nevertheless, they have hardly been recognized as key players in the Humanitarian sector. However recently this has been changing and private sector is getting more and more engaged (Hoxtell, Norz, and Teicke, 2015). Zyck and Kent (2014) argue that these relationships between Humanitarian Organizations and the Private sectors can be both voluntary and collaborative, where participants agree to work together to achieve a common purpose. Bendell and Muphy (2010) argue that where there is mutual agreement partners share risk, benefits as well as responsibilities. For that reason, private sector teaming up with the humanitarian sector combines efforts and achieves humanitarian gains that benefit persons in distress during disasters. This research focuses on three key roles of Private Sector engagement that influence implementation of humanitarian aid projects: humanitarian logistics, humanitarian funding and humanitarian technology. The study argues that when private sector offers these services humanitarian organisations are able to deliver better services to persons in distress.

Problem statement

In Kenya, disasters have continued to press the communities including floods, droughts, terror attacks, disease outbreak among others. These challenging occurrences need to be addressed so as to avert possible deaths that may arise as a result of these severe disasters. Humanitarian organizations have been responding to these disasters over the years nonetheless their abilities have been overstretched requiring external support. More often than not they have been faced with challenges in humanitarian logistics such as transportation of relief goods, financing such as lack for or shortage of funds and inadequate technology. These challenges are often available to the private sector and as such the reason for private sector engagement in humanitarian aid projects. Even so, critics argue that this engagement may compromise the organizational Culture of humanitarian organizations specifically, principles of humanitarian aid which are humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence. However, previous studies indicate that in engaging the private sector, there are opportunities as well as constraints, but these constraints can be overcome. Failure to engage the private sector may result in NGOs in disaster relief becoming less relevant as their ability to respond to disasters and conflict continues to diminish due to complexity, overwhelming needs and increasing disaster frequencies. As such this study is both timely and relevant and seeks to close the gap in research by examining the influence of private sector engagement on implementation of humanitarian aid projects in Kenya.

Research Objective

1. To assess the extent to which the Private sector engagement influences the implementation of humanitarian aid projects.

Research Question

1. To what extent does private sector engagement influence the implementation of humanitarian aid projects?

Research Hypothesis

1. Private sector engagement has significant influence on the implementation of humanitarian aid projects.

The concept of Private sector engagement and implementation of humanitarian aid projects

To improve implementation of humanitarian aid projects implementation during disasters there is need to not only engage the private sector in single areas of expertise but in a combination of different areas of expertise. This study has focused on three areas of expertise combined; humanitarian logistics, humanitarian financing and humanitarian technology. By doing this the humanitarian organizations are likely to benefit more from the private sector engagement and as a result help more persons in distress during disasters. Wood (2011) argues that it is possible for humanitarian organizations to implement humanitarian aid projects that are more focused and efficient through collaborations with the Private sector. Humanitarian organizations have been struggling with increasing humanitarian needs calling for other actors including business partners to step in and offer their assistance (OCHA, 2016). The Private sector contributes to achieving results to ensure that their process, products and services contribute to achievement of desired goals after disaster happen. Humanitarian Organizations then utilize evidence on actual results to inform decision making on the design, resourcing, delivery of programmes and activities as well as for accountability. Private sector engagement has the potential to bring about change in the way humanitarian projects are implemented, increasing funding, the reach, timeliness and giving appropriate aid.

Humanitarian organizations sometimes measure their level of assistance by the mere provision of assistance they give to persons in distress (Bernett, 1990). However, with the private sector stepping in they are providing more measurable indicators to prove evidence of aid through the available technology and expertise. This has contributed to better response to disasters as different organizations have different styles and cultures which are sometimes magnified by rivalry and politics (Hilhorst, 2002). The Private sector is clear on the quality of their services and humanitarian organizations face big challenges in saying what quality is and what it is not. Even though there were different levels of controls in the form of formal checks on management and finance imposed by donors it did not guarantee quality implementation, there is therefore emphasis on evidence-based aid as donors demand to know how their money is spent. The perception of beneficiaries on the crises affected areas also matter in determining how implementation is done. However, Dijkzeul and Wakenga (2010) argued that perceptions can differ considerably between local authorities, agencies and beneficiaries in terms of need based aid. Drifmeyer and Liewellyn (2014) study on 'towards more effective humanitarian assistance' determined that the influence of one experience, education and training in humanitarian assistance is key to determining what is considered effective implementation. Proper tools and techniques when delivering aid are also integral to more effective implementation of humanitarian aid projects. More effective implementation requires developing specific written purpose criteria and quantifiable measures with all involved including donors, beneficiaries, host Nations and NGOs. Also,

analysing results to compare outcome with international consensus for minimal performance in the sphere project (Hilhorst, 2002). Agencies like Oxfam Great Britain are supporting engagement of the private sector through long term partnership (Walker and Pepper, 2007).

Research Methodology

For this study secondary data was collected using peer reviewed journals, critical reviews of past discourse on private sector engagement in humanitarian aid projects implementation, published materials, annual reports and grey literature. The study was guided by pragmatism paradigm that allowed the research to apply both qualitative and quantitative methods when conducting research as asserted by (Teddlie and Tashakori, 2010). The choice of the paradigm was informed by the ontological, epistemological, axiological and methodological underpinning of pragmatism and the study problem. As argued by Krefting (1991) gathering qualitative data is important in understanding the gaps in quantitative data. The study applied survey design and the strategy of enquiry was mixed methods where the researcher utilized questionnaires, interview guides and focus group discussions to collect data. The target population was both Non-Governmental Organizations and private sector companies based in Nairobi Kenya. Seventy-seven organizations and forty private sector companies in disaster relief were sampled using stratified sampling. Stratified sampling was used to allow for the different strata. The respondents targeted were the senior humanitarian officers engaged during disasters. The questionnaires issued contained likert type scale 1 to 5 where 1 equals strongly agree, 2 equals disagree, 3 equals neutral, 4 equals agree and 5 equals strongly agree. The questionnaires were both electronic and paper-based due to the availability of target respondents. Key Informant Interviews were administered to directors and where the directors were not available assistant Directors were interviewed. Lastly Focus Group Discussion themes were administered to aid recipients. The utilization of secondary and primary data was important in triangulation of information to enrich the research. Before going to the field to collect data, the researcher sought research authorization letter from National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) and Nairobi City County Department of Education, Youth Affairs and Social Services Sector.

Study Findings

After data collection it was organized, sorted and coded to make it amenable for analysis. The data was analysed using both qualitative and inferential statistics using SPSS. First the study analysed the background information of the respondents before analysing private sector engagement and implementation of humanitarian aid projects.

Background information of respondents

At data collection stage, the study sought general information on geographic scope of operation, duration of engagement, humanitarian private sector collaboration, and mode of collaboration and key areas of engagement before embarking on the main study to ascertain their relevance for the study. Of the 85 respondents out of the 117 issued with

questionnaires, 58 (68.2%) were international organizations while 18 (21.2%) were operating regionally and 9(10.6%) were operating nationally. Atleast 43 (56.6%) had been engaged for more than 16 years, with 6 (7.1%) having been in operation for 0-5 years. On humanitarian private sector collaboration, study findings indicated that 81.2% of the humanitarian organizations in Nairobi agree to the fact that humanitarian-private sector collaboration had a huge effect on the implementation of humanitarian aid projects, a paltry 16 (18.8%) disagreed with this statement. On the mode of collaboration the study findings clearly show that 15(17.6%) have long term partnership, 18 (21.2%) collaborate as implementing partners, 23 (27.1%) collaborate on short term partnership while 29 (34.1%) collaborate in adhoc partnerships.

The findings of Private sector engagement and implementation of humanitarian aid projects

Findings indicated that when private sector engagement in humanitarian logistics, humanitarian financing and humanitarian technology was applied there was improvement in implement humanitarian aid projects during disasters. There was more access to relief good, better transportation, agility, preparedness, solutions to insufficient funds through diversification, funding strategies and the relief funds were also more accessible to organizations in disaster relief. Further humanitarian innovation, utilization of communication technologies, digital fund mobilization and digital humanitarian response contributed to improved implementation of humanitarian aid projects. With this collaboration, it is possible to respond to sudden changes in need by persons in distress during a disaster; and there are available written contingency plans and procedures to respond to disasters. Needless to say, over dependency on one donor leads to less humanitarian funding and private sector issue grants to humanitarian organizations for sudden on-set disasters. Also, raising humanitarian funds through mobile money has been a success; cash transfer through mobile money enable quicker access to relief aid.

Through humanitarian logistics organizations can deliver when there are sudden changes in relief need as they have written contingency plans. At the same time the organizations are not depending on one donor for funding and therefore they are likely to access funds easily from other sectors such as private sector and lastly by utilizing humanitarian technology money can be easily raised through digital means and transferred to persons in distress through mobile cash transfers. Private sector engagement in humanitarian logistics, humanitarian financing and humanitarian technology had a composite mean of 3.4616 and standard deviation of 0.34677 as shown in Table 1.1. Since the measurements were carried out using a 5 pointer Likert Scale, a composite mean of 3.4616 indicates a more than average influence of private engagement in implementation of humanitarian aid projects.

Table 1.4 Private Sector Engagement and implementation of humanitarian aid projects

Description	n	Mean	Std. Deviation
Humanitarian Logistics	85	3.4141	.48896
Humanitarian Financing	85	3.5400	.41005
Humanitarian Technology.	85	3.4306	.45304
Organizational Culture	85	3.5953	.43312
Composite mean and standard deviation	85	3.4616	.34677

n=Total number of respondents=85

Source: Field data (2019)

Correlations analysis on private sector engagement and implementation of humanitarian aid projects

When hypothesis was tested correlation, analysis was employed to establish the nature and degree of the interaction between private sector engagement and implementation of humanitarian aid projects. The results obtained are shown in Table 1.2

Table 1.2: Correlation Matrix for Private sector engagement

		Implementation of Humanitarian Aid Projects	Combined Private Sector Engagement
Implementation of Humanitarian Aid Projects	Pearson Correlation	1	0.723
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.004
	n	85	85
Private Sector Engagement	Pearson Correlation	0.723	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.004	
	n	85	85

Source: Field data (2019)

The results in Table 1.2 indicate that there exists a strong relationship between implementation of humanitarian aid projects and private sector engagement with a correlation coefficient of 0.723. The relationship is statistically significant since the p value is 0.004 which is below the statistically accepted significance level of $p < 0.05$. This shows that private sector engagement improves implementation of humanitarian aid projects.

Regressions analysis on private sector engagement and implementation of humanitarian aid projects

The study assessed the effect of private sector engagement on implementation of humanitarian aid projects and obtained the model specification results as presented in Table 1.3

Table 1.3: Model Specification for Private Sector Engagement

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.723	.523	.518	.0093

a. Predictors: (Constant), Private Sector Engagement.

b. Dependent Variable: Implementation of Humanitarian Aid projects

Source: Field data (2019)

The coefficient of determination was 0.518, implying that private sector engagement explains 51.8% of the change in aid project implementation. This implies that their involvement has potential to improve implementation during disasters.

Table 1.4 shows the regression model coefficients of private sector engagement and implementation of humanitarian aid projects.

Table 1.4 Private Sector engagement regression Model Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	3.163	.993		1.298	.003
Private Sector engagement	.723	.302	.718	1.013	.001

- a. Dependent Variable: Implementation of humanitarian aid projects
Source: Field data (2019)

The positive regression model constant (3.163) is an indication that private sector engagement and implementation of humanitarian aid projects are positively correlated. This implies that a unit change in the private sector engagement leads to a 3.163 variation in implementation of humanitarian aid projects.

Conclusion

The objective focused on private sector engagement and implementation of humanitarian aid projects. The study sought to establish whether humanitarian organizations collaborated with the private sector during disasters. The results of the study indicate that a strong relation and a positive regression coefficient depicting that Private sector benefit the implementation of humanitarian aid projects. Currently majority of humanitarian organizations only engage in one sector of their choice however this study has demonstrated that they could benefit more by engaging the private sector in more areas of expertise in order to benefit from their knowledge and skills. This study is advancing the knowledge that humanitarian organizations need to engage the private sector more and more in different areas of expertise. This study is important in helping the policy makers in humanitarian work get to a round table to redraft policies that are friendlier to private sector participation in humanitarian aid; this will be helpful to those at risk of being affected by both the natural disasters and conflicts. Globally some humanitarian organizations are already engaging private sector companies through outsourcing and they are improving their response, this move should be encouraged across the borders. Private sector engagement in humanitarian logistics, humanitarian financing and humanitarian technology is key to ensuring better response during disasters in Kenya and should be encouraged.

Recommendations

The study made several recommendations as follows; engaging the private sector in a combination of fields to ensure effective response in onset of a disaster. This may relieve humanitarian organizations from worrying about services they can get from the private sector and therefore be able to concentrate more on their policies and growth. When humanitarian organizations focus on improving their results and impact to the persons in distress, they are able to save more lives and have better plans to respond to disasters. The

issue of engaging the private sector in humanitarian projects implementation has grown in importance due to the increasing number of disasters that have become more frequent placing more people in danger. Engaging the private sector in various fields therefore could immensely benefit the humanitarian sector. The study also recommends, creation of a body of private sector companies engaging in humanitarian work. Such a body will bring together private sector companies in disaster relief and be able to access them when a disaster strikes or for further research. There is need for strategic private sector-humanitarian partnerships; this will be helpful in responding to the ever-growing disasters in Kenya that have often resulted in dozens of people dying. This study showed that more often than not humanitarian organizations take it alone and sometimes they are overwhelmed by the size and complexity of disasters. If they can form partnerships then they will be able to relieve some services to the private sector and this will benefit humanitarian response. If this does not happen sooner, humanitarian organizations will be risking being irrelevant as they continue to watch helplessly as people die when disasters happen. Most studies in the humanitarian field have been carried out in small numbers by organizations and a few research institutions. Also, few institutions offer skills in humanitarian aid yet it consists of a whole ecosystem in our economic, social and political life. This study shows that if more research is done on humanitarianism then there will be better preparedness and response to disasters in Kenya. Perhaps it is time to focus on the effects of disasters and find out how they hinder our day to day development progress then the policy makers can focus their money and energy to minimize lack of knowledge in humanitarian field through investing in research.

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