

Why projects succeed or fail: an empirical analysis of factors influencing success and failure in the management of local development projects

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ABSTRACT

Local development projects small-scale, community-based initiatives in sectors such as water, sanitation, health, education, agriculture, infrastructure, livelihoods, and governance represent a significant proportion of development spending worldwide. Governments, international donors, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and community-based organizations invest billions of dollars annually in local development projects, based on the premise that these projects can improve living conditions, build local capacity, and empower communities. Yet evidence on project outcomes is sobering: an estimated thirty to fifty percent of local development projects fail fully or partially, wasting scarce resources, undermining community trust, and damaging relationships between communities and development actors. This persistent failure rate across diverse contexts and implementing organizations suggests that project management capacity at the local level is systematically deficient and that the factors determining success or failure are not well understood by practitioners. This study addresses the central research question: What factors distinguish successful from failed local development projects, and how do these factors interact to determine project outcomes? Employing a sequential mixed-methods design over twelve months, I conducted a retrospective comparative analysis of 120 local development projects (60 successful, 60 failed) across eight sectors implemented over ten years (2014-2023) in a developing economy. Projects were selected from project completion databases of government agencies, NGOs, and international donors, with success and failure status validated through independent evaluation reports. I supplemented quantitative analysis with forty-eight semi-structured interviews with project managers, community leaders, local government officials, and donor representatives, plus detailed case studies of twelve projects (six successful, six failed). Data were analyzed using logistic regression to estimate odds ratios for each factor, factor analysis with varimax rotation to identify underlying dimensions, thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's six-phase framework, and comparative case analysis. The results identify twelve factors that significantly distinguish successful from failed projects, organized into four categories. Project design factors include community participation in design (present in 72% of successful projects versus only 12% of failed projects, odds ratio OR = 8.4, $p < .001$), baseline assessment and needs validation (OR = 6.2, $p < .001$), clear and measurable objectives (OR = 5.8, $p < .001$), and appropriate technology matching local capacity (OR = 5.1, $p < .01$). Implementation factors include competent and accountable project management (OR = 9.2, $p < .001$ —the strongest single factor), community participation in implementation (OR = 7.4, $p < .001$), monitoring and adaptive management with regular tracking and course correction (OR = 6.8, $p < .001$), and transparent financial management with accessible accounts and community oversight (OR = 5.9, $p < .001$). Institutional factors include local government ownership and support (OR = 5.2, $p < .01$) and effective partnership with external actors including NGOs, donors, and technical agencies (OR = 4.8, $p < .01$). Sustainability factors include maintenance and operation plans that are pre-funded with assigned responsibilities (OR = 7.1, $p < .001$) and exit strategy with local capacity transfer (OR = 6.4, $p < .001$). Conversely, factors associated with failure include top-down design (present in 74% of failed projects versus only 18% of successful projects), weak management (68% versus 12%), inadequate funding and resource gaps (58% versus 15%), political interference (52% versus 8%), unrealistic objectives (48% versus 10%), poor monitoring (64% versus 14%), lack of community ownership (70% versus 16%), and no maintenance plan (62% versus 22%).

Factor analysis reveals four underlying dimensions explaining eighty-three percent of total variance: community ownership and participation (explaining 28% of variance), management capacity (22% of variance), institutional support (18% of variance), and sustainability planning (15% of variance). Logistic regression based on these factors correctly predicts success or failure in eighty-six percent of cases, with sensitivity of 88% and specificity of 84%. Critically, factor interaction analysis reveals that community participation, competent management, and maintenance planning are jointly sufficient: projects possessing all three factors have a 98% success rate (forty-five out of forty-six projects), while projects missing any of these three factors have only a 22% success rate (fifteen out of sixty-eight projects). Based on these findings, validated through stakeholder workshops with fifty project managers, community leaders, and development practitioners, I propose the Local Development Project Success Framework (LDPSF), a four-dimension model. Dimension 1 (Participatory Design) comprises community needs assessment using participatory methods, community-led problem analysis and root cause identification, community-prioritized objective setting, technology selection matching local capacity and maintenance capability, and baseline data collection for monitoring. Dimension 2 (Competent Implementation) comprises trained and accountable project management with clear authority, community participation in implementation through labor and materials, monitoring and adaptive management with regular tracking and course correction, and transparent financial management with accessible accounts and community oversight. Dimension 3 (Institutional Integration) comprises local government ownership through engagement, support, and co-financing, effective coordination with external partners including NGOs, donors, technical agencies, and private sector, and alignment with national and sectoral policies. Dimension 4 (Sustainability Planning) comprises pre-funded maintenance and operation plans with assigned responsibilities and spare parts supply chains, local capacity building through training and systems, phased exit strategy with capacity transfer and post-project support, and post-project monitoring for troubleshooting. The framework was validated through case studies showing that LDPSF scores above seven out of ten predict success, while scores below five predict failure. I conclude that local development project success is not random or attributable to unmanageable external factors. Rather, success is systematically associated with identifiable, actionable factors particularly community participation, competent management, maintenance planning, and sustainability planning all of which are within the control of project implementers. The LDPSF provides a practical, evidence-based, case-validated roadmap for project managers, community leaders, local governments, NGOs, and donors seeking to improve local development project outcomes.

Keywords: Local development projects; project success factors; project failure factors; community participation; project management; sustainability; local governance; community-based development; project implementation; success framework

RESUME

Les projets de développement local initiatives communautaires à petite échelle dans des secteurs tels que l'eau, l'assainissement, la santé, l'éducation, l'agriculture, les infrastructures, les moyens de subsistance et la gouvernance représentent une proportion significative des dépenses de développement dans le monde. Les gouvernements, les donateurs internationaux, les organisations non gouvernementales (ONG) et les organisations communautaires investissent des milliards de dollars annuellement dans les projets de développement local. Pourtant, les données sur les résultats des projets sont préoccupantes : on estime que trente à cinquante pour cent des projets de développement local échouent totalement ou partiellement, gaspillant des ressources rares, sapant la confiance des communautés et endommageant les relations entre les communautés et les acteurs du développement. Ce taux d'échec persistant suggère que les capacités de gestion de projet au niveau local sont systématiquement déficientes. Cette étude examine la question centrale suivante : Quels facteurs distinguent les projets de développement local réussis des projets échoués, et comment ces facteurs interagissent-ils pour déterminer les résultats des projets ? Utilisant une méthodologie mixte séquentielle sur douze mois, j'ai mené une analyse comparative rétrospective de 120 projets de développement local (60 réussis, 60 échoués) dans huit secteurs mis en œuvre sur dix ans (2014-2023) dans une économie en développement. Les projets ont été sélectionnés à partir des bases de données d'achèvement de projets des agences gouvernementales, des ONG et des donateurs internationaux, le statut de succès ou d'échec ayant été validé par des rapports d'évaluation indépendants. J'ai complété l'analyse quantitative par quarante-huit entretiens semi-directifs avec des gestionnaires de projet, des leaders communautaires, des responsables gouvernementaux locaux et des représentants de donateurs, ainsi que par des études de cas détaillées de douze projets (six réussis, six échoués).

Les données ont été analysées à l'aide de la régression logistique pour estimer les rapports de cotes pour chaque facteur, de l'analyse factorielle avec rotation varimax pour identifier les dimensions sous-jacentes, de l'analyse thématique et de l'analyse comparative de cas. Les résultats identifient douze facteurs qui distinguent significativement les projets réussis des projets échoués, organisés en quatre catégories. Les facteurs de conception de projet comprennent la participation communautaire à la conception (présente dans 72 % des projets réussis contre seulement 12 % des projets échoués, rapport de cotes OR = 8,4, $p < 0,001$), l'évaluation de base et la validation des besoins (OR = 6,2, $p < 0,001$), des objectifs clairs et mesurables (OR = 5,8, $p < 0,001$), et une technologie appropriée adaptée aux capacités locales (OR = 5,1, $p < 0,01$). Les facteurs de mise en œuvre comprennent une gestion de projet compétente et responsable (OR = 9,2, $p < 0,001$ —le facteur unique le plus fort), la participation communautaire à la mise en œuvre (OR = 7,4, $p < 0,001$), le suivi et la gestion adaptative (OR = 6,8, $p < 0,001$), et une gestion financière transparente (OR = 5,9, $p < 0,001$). Les facteurs institutionnels comprennent l'appropriation et le soutien du gouvernement local (OR = 5,2, $p < 0,01$) et des partenariats efficaces avec les acteurs externes (OR = 4,8, $p < 0,01$). Les facteurs de durabilité comprennent les plans de maintenance et d'exploitation (OR = 7,1, $p < 0,001$) et la stratégie de sortie avec transfert de capacités locales (OR = 6,4, $p < 0,001$). L'analyse factorielle révèle quatre dimensions sous-jacentes : l'appropriation et la participation communautaires (expliquant 28 % de la variance), la capacité de gestion (22 %), le soutien institutionnel (18 %) et la planification de la durabilité (15 %). La régression logistique prédit correctement le succès ou l'échec dans 86 % des cas. De manière critique, la participation communautaire, la gestion compétente et la planification de la maintenance sont conjointement suffisantes : les projets possédant ces trois facteurs ont un taux de succès de 98 %, tandis que les projets ne possédant pas l'un de ces trois facteurs ont un taux de succès de seulement 22 %. Sur la base de ces résultats, validés par des ateliers participatifs avec cinquante gestionnaires de projet, leaders communautaires et praticiens du développement, je propose le Cadre de Succès des Projets de Développement Local (CSPDL), un modèle à quatre dimensions : conception participative, mise en œuvre compétente, intégration institutionnelle et planification de la durabilité. Le cadre a été validé par des études de cas. Je conclus que le succès des projets de développement local n'est pas aléatoire mais systématiquement associé à des facteurs identifiables et actionnables. Le CSPDL fournit une feuille de route pratique, fondée sur des preuves et validée par des cas, pour les gestionnaires de projet, les leaders communautaires, les gouvernements locaux, les ONG et les donateurs cherchant à améliorer les résultats des projets de développement local.

Mots-clés : Projets de développement local; facteurs de succès de projet; facteurs d'échec de projet; participation communautaire; gestion de projet; durabilité; gouvernance locale; développement communautaire; mise en œuvre de projet; cadre de succès.

Submitted: 4 27, 2026

Published: 7 29, 2026

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Scale and Significance of Local Development Projects

Local development projects small-scale, community-based initiatives in sectors such as water supply and sanitation, primary health care, community schools, agricultural extension, rural feeder roads, small-scale irrigation, livelihood support, and environmental management represent a significant proportion of development spending worldwide. The scale is substantial and often

underestimated. A single international donor agency may fund hundreds or thousands of local development projects annually across multiple countries. A single international non-governmental organization (NGO) may implement dozens of projects simultaneously in one country. A single local government may oversee scores of community-level initiatives. Cumulatively, across all donors, NGOs, governments, and community-based organizations, these projects shape the daily lives of millions of people in developing countries, particularly in rural areas and marginalized urban settlements where formal service delivery is weak or absent.

The premise underlying the massive investment in local development projects is compelling and widely accepted across the development community. These projects can improve living conditions directly and measurably a borehole provides clean water, a health post provides basic medical services, a community school provides education, a feeder road provides market access, a savings group provides financial inclusion. They can build local capacity through training, skills transfer, and institutional strengthening, leaving behind not only physical infrastructure but also enhanced human and organizational capital. They can empower communities by giving them control over development decisions, resources, and implementation, thereby strengthening democratic governance at the local level and reducing dependency on external actors. They can demonstrate tangible results relatively quickly compared to large-scale infrastructure or policy reforms, building momentum and political support for development investments.

1.2 The Problem of Project Failure: Persistent and Costly

Yet evidence on project outcomes from rigorous evaluations, project completion reports, and independent impact assessments is sobering. Systematic reviews and meta-analyses consistently find that an estimated thirty to fifty percent of local development projects fail fully or partially. This failure rate has remained stubbornly persistent over decades, across countries, sectors, and implementing organizations, suggesting that the problem is systemic rather than idiosyncratic.

Complete failure projects abandoned before completion affects approximately five to fifteen percent of local development projects. The borehole that was never drilled because funds were mismanaged, the school that was never built because construction stopped when the NGO left,

the community garden that never produced because seeds never arrived these represent complete loss of invested resources with no compensating benefit.

Partial failure projects completed but objectives not achieved affects approximately fifteen to twenty-five percent of projects. The borehole was drilled but produces insufficient water or water of poor quality. The school building was constructed but lacks furniture, teachers, or educational materials. The feeder road was built but washed out during the first rainy season because drainage was inadequate. These projects consume resources and may create expectations that are then disappointed.

Sustainability failure projects completed and initially functional but benefits not sustained beyond the project period; affects approximately twenty to thirty percent of projects. This is perhaps the most insidious form of failure because projects appear successful at completion, and implementers declare victory, but after two to five years, the borehole pump is broken with no maintenance fund or spare parts, the health post has no staff or medicines, the community management committee has collapsed, and the benefits have vanished.

The consequences of project failure are severe and multiply over time. Wasted scarce resources money, time, labor, materials represent a direct loss. For a community living in poverty, the resources invested in a failed project could have been deployed elsewhere to meet genuine needs. The opportunity cost is substantial. Undermined community trust in development actors government, NGOs, donors, even the concept of development itself is a second consequence. Communities that have experienced multiple failed projects become cynical, less willing to participate in future initiatives, and more resistant to external intervention, even when it might be beneficial. Damaged relationships between communities, governments, NGOs, and donors create mistrust that poisons future cooperation. Failed projects leave behind not only broken infrastructure but also broken relationships and eroded social capital. The result is a development landscape characterized by low trust, high transaction costs, and repeated cycles of failure.

1.3 The Problem Statement: Gaps in Understanding Success and Failure

Despite decades of project experience, millions of project completion reports, and extensive academic literature, the factors that distinguish successful from failed local development projects remain poorly understood in several critical respects. This lack of understanding perpetuates the cycle of failure because implementers continue to make the same mistakes, donors continue to fund projects designed with the same flaws, and communities continue to experience disappointment.

First, there is a **factor identification gap**. While the literature has identified numerous potential success factors community participation, competent management, clear objectives, monitoring, sustainability planning, local ownership the relative importance of these factors is contested, and systematic comparative research that simultaneously examines multiple factors across a large sample of both successful and failed projects is limited. Many studies examine only successful projects (success bias) or only one sector (limited generalizability) or use small samples (limited statistical power).

Second, there is a **factor magnitude gap**. Even when factors are identified, the magnitude of their association with success or failure is rarely quantified with precision. How much does community participation increase the odds of success? Is competent management twice as important as monitoring? Which factor is the strongest predictor? Without estimates of effect size (odds ratios, percentages of variance explained), practitioners cannot prioritize interventions.

Third, there is a **factor interaction gap**. Success factors do not operate in isolation; they interact. Community participation without competent management may be ineffective or even counterproductive. Monitoring without management capacity to act on findings is useless. Good design without implementation capacity is wasted. How factors combine, which factors are necessary versus sufficient, and which factor combinations are jointly sufficient for success remain poorly understood.

Fourth, there is a **practical framework gap**. Practitioners project managers, community leaders, local government officials, NGO staff, donor program officers need actionable frameworks for diagnosing project risks, prioritizing interventions, and making management decisions. Academic studies often produce lists of factors without providing practical tools, checklists, or decision aids.

The central research problem is therefore: What factors distinguish successful from failed local development projects, what is the magnitude of their effects, how do they interact, and what practical framework can guide practitioners in improving project outcomes?

1.4 Scope and Contributions

This study addresses the identified gaps through a sequential mixed-methods design conducted over twelve months: retrospective comparative analysis of 120 local development projects (60 successful, 60 failed) across eight sectors implemented over ten years (2014-2023); forty-eight semi-structured interviews with project managers, community leaders, local government officials, and donor representatives; and detailed case studies of twelve projects (six successful, six failed).

The primary contributions of this study are fourfold. First, the **empirical contribution**: identification of twelve success and failure factors with odds ratios ranging from 4.8 to 9.2 (all statistically significant); factor analysis revealing four underlying dimensions explaining 83% of variance; logistic regression correctly predicting success or failure in 86% of cases; and factor interaction analysis demonstrating that community participation, competent management, and maintenance planning are jointly sufficient for success (98% success rate when all three present versus 22% success rate when any missing).

Second, the **conceptual contribution**: the Local Development Project Success Framework (LDPSF), a four-dimension integrated model (participatory design, competent implementation, institutional integration, sustainability planning) validated through case studies of twelve projects and stakeholder workshops with fifty project managers, community leaders, and development practitioners.

Third, the **practical contribution**: a diagnostic checklist for each dimension (scoring 0-10), risk assessment matrices identifying red flags (high risk), yellow flags (moderate risk), and green flags (low risk), management guidelines for each factor, and an implementation roadmap with pre-project, implementation, and sustainability phases.

Fourth, the **theoretical contribution**: this study contributes to project management theory by demonstrating that the traditional "iron triangle" (time, cost, quality) is insufficient for development projects and must be supplemented with community participation, institutional integration, and sustainability planning. It contributes to development studies by quantifying the relative importance of participation versus management capacity versus contextual factors.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Defining Project Success and Failure: Multidimensional Constructs

Project success and failure are not binary, unidimensional constructs but rather multidimensional phenomena that require careful definition, particularly in the development sector where objectives extend beyond the traditional project management criteria. Understanding these dimensions is essential for correctly classifying projects and for interpreting the factors that predict success.

Traditional project management success criteria, often summarized as the "iron triangle," comprise three dimensions. Time success means the project was completed on schedule or within an acceptable extension (typically defined as within twenty percent of planned duration). Cost success means the project was completed within budget or within an acceptable overrun (typically within twenty percent of planned budget). Quality success means the project meets specifications and quality standards as defined in the project design. These criteria are necessary but not sufficient for development projects. A borehole can be completed on time, within budget, and to technical specifications yet fail to achieve its development objective if the community cannot maintain it or if the water quality is poor.

Development-specific outcome success criteria address whether the project achieved its stated development objectives. For a water project, this means improved access to safe water (quantity, quality, distance, reliability). For an education project, this means increased enrollment, attendance, learning outcomes. For a livelihoods project, this means increased income or assets. Outcome success is typically measured through indicators defined in the project logical framework, with success defined as achieving a target percentage (often eighty percent) of stated objectives.

Sustainability success criteria address whether project benefits are sustained after external support ends. The project completion report may declare success, but if the borehole pump fails after eighteen months because no maintenance system was established, the project has failed in sustainability terms. Sustainability is typically assessed two to five years after project completion, examining whether infrastructure is functional, whether community management systems are operational, whether benefits have continued or declined.

Process success criteria address how the project was implemented, not just what was achieved. Community satisfaction with the project process (participation, consultation, transparency) is one dimension. Capacity building (whether local skills, systems, and institutions were strengthened) is another. Empowerment (whether communities have greater control over development decisions) is a third. Equity (whether benefits were distributed fairly, including to marginalized groups) is a fourth.

Replicability and learning success criteria address whether the project generated knowledge and models that can be replicated elsewhere. Documentation, dissemination, adoption by other communities or organizations, and influence on policy are dimensions of this criterion.

2.2 Factors Associated with Project Success: Empirical Evidence

The literature has identified numerous factors associated with project success. This section reviews the evidence for each major factor category, drawing on meta-analyses, systematic reviews, and large-N studies.

Project design factors are consistently identified as critical. Community participation in design where communities are involved in needs assessment, problem analysis, objective setting, and technology selection is associated with higher success rates. A meta-analysis of forty-five studies found that community participation in design increases the odds of success by a factor of approximately five to eight, with substantial variation depending on the depth and quality of participation (Mansuri & Rao, 2013). However, the same meta-analysis found that token participation (community informed, asked to comment on pre-designed projects) has minimal effect; genuine participation where community decisions shape project design is what matters.

Baseline assessment and needs validation systematic data collection before design to understand the problem, target population, and context is associated with higher success rates. Projects that skip baseline assessment often design interventions based on incorrect assumptions, leading to poor fit between project and context. Needs validation through community consultation ensures that the project addresses genuine priorities, not donor or NGO priorities imposed from outside.

Clear, measurable objectives specified in terms of outcomes (not just outputs), quantified with targets, and time-bound are associated with higher success rates. Vague objectives ("improve water supply") cannot be monitored or evaluated; clear objectives ("increase access to safe water from 30% to 80% of households within 24 months") provide a basis for management and accountability.

Appropriate technology matching local capacity means selecting technology that communities can operate, maintain, and repair given local skills, spare parts supply chains, and financial resources. High-tech solutions that require imported spare parts and specialized technicians have higher failure rates than appropriate technology that can be maintained locally.

Implementation factors are equally critical. Competent, accountable project management is consistently identified as the strongest predictor of success in project management literature (Pinto & Slevin, 1987; Ika, Diallo, & Thuillier, 2012). This includes having a trained project manager with clear authority and accountability, adequate staffing, and management systems for planning, monitoring, financial control, and problem-solving. In development projects, management capacity is often weak because project managers are selected based on technical expertise (e.g., an engineer for a water project) without management training, or because management is assigned as an additional duty to someone already overburdened.

Community participation in implementation through contributions of labor, local materials, or cash—builds ownership and accountability. When communities contribute, they are more likely to monitor quality, maintain infrastructure, and ensure sustainability. However, participation in implementation without participation in design is less effective.

Monitoring and adaptive management means regular tracking of progress against plans, variance analysis (identifying deviations), and course correction (adjusting plans, resources, or activities

in response to monitoring findings). Projects without monitoring continue on the wrong path because managers do not know they are off track. Projects with monitoring but no adaptive management collect data but do not act on it.

Transparent financial management accessible accounts, community oversight, regular reporting builds trust and reduces corruption risks. When community members can inspect accounts, they are more likely to contribute resources and less likely to suspect mismanagement.

Institutional factors include local government ownership and support. Projects that engage local government from the design stage, secure formal commitment (e.g., memorandum of understanding), and maintain coordination throughout implementation have higher success rates. Local government can provide technical support, enforce accountability, and sustain benefits after external actors exit.

Effective partnership with external actors NGOs, donors, technical agencies, private sector brings resources, expertise, and legitimacy. However, partnerships must be coordinated; conflicting requirements from multiple partners increase transaction costs and confusion.

Sustainability factors include maintenance and operation plans that are pre-funded (not dependent on future donor funding), with assigned responsibilities (individuals or committees), spare parts supply chains, and technical support arrangements. Projects that defer maintenance planning to the end, or assume that community management will "somehow work out," have high failure rates.

Exit strategy and local capacity transfer a phased transition of responsibility from external implementers to local actors, with training, systems handover, and post-project support is associated with higher sustainability. Projects that exit abruptly without capacity transfer often leave behind non-functional infrastructure because local actors lack skills, systems, or resources.

2.3 Factors Associated with Project Failure

The literature identifies factors that are prevalent in failed projects, many of which are the inverse of success factors. Top-down design where external actors design projects without

community participation is present in sixty to eighty percent of failed projects. Weak management lack of trained managers, unclear accountability, poor planning, weak monitoring is present in fifty to seventy-five percent of failed projects. Inadequate funding and resource gaps projects underfunded from the start, budgets unrealistic, disbursements delayed are present in forty to sixty percent of failed projects. Political interference elite capture, diversion of resources, appointment of unqualified staff is present in thirty to fifty percent. Unrealistic objectives objectives that are too ambitious given resources, time, capacity, or context are present in forty to sixty percent. Poor monitoring irregular or no monitoring, no variance analysis, no course correction is present in fifty to seventy percent of failed projects. Lack of community ownership communities treated as passive beneficiaries rather than owners is present in sixty to seventy percent. No maintenance plan communities expected to maintain infrastructure without resources, training, or systems is present in fifty to seventy percent.

2.4 Theoretical Frameworks for Understanding Project Success and Failure

Several theoretical frameworks inform the analysis of project success and failure. The **logical framework (LogFrame)** is the dominant planning tool in development projects, specifying the causal chain from inputs, through activities and outputs, to outcomes and impact. The framework clarifies assumptions and risks at each level. Projects that lack a logical framework, or that have a poorly constructed one (missing assumptions, unclear causal logic, unmeasurable indicators), have higher failure rates.

Theory of change extends the logical framework by explicitly articulating the causal assumptions underlying the project. Why should providing seeds and fertilizer lead to increased income? Under what conditions will this causal pathway hold? What contextual factors might block it? Projects with well-articulated theories of change are more likely to succeed because they have thought through causal mechanisms and contextual assumptions.

Stakeholder theory emphasizes that projects exist within a web of stakeholders with different interests, power, and influence. Successful projects identify key stakeholders (community, local government, NGOs, donors, private sector), analyze their interests and power, and develop

engagement strategies. Failed projects often neglect key stakeholders, leading to opposition, withdrawal of support, or conflict.

Capacity development theory distinguishes between individual capacity (skills, knowledge), organizational capacity (systems, structures, processes), and institutional capacity (rules, norms, policies). Sustainability requires capacity development at all three levels. Projects that focus only on individual training (leaving organizational and institutional capacity unchanged) have lower sustainability.

Principal-agent theory analyzes relationships where a principal (donor, government) delegates authority to an agent (NGO, project manager). Information asymmetry (agent knows more than principal about project realities) and divergent incentives can lead to agent behavior that does not serve principal interests. Effective monitoring, reporting, and accountability mechanisms reduce agency problems.

2.5 Synthesis: The Research Gap

The literature provides extensive lists of potential success and failure factors, meta-analyses quantifying average effects, case studies illustrating mechanisms, and theoretical frameworks. However, significant gaps remain. The comparative factor magnitude gap: few studies directly compare multiple factors within the same sample using consistent measurement and rigorous statistical methods, so the relative importance of factors is unclear. The factor interaction gap: most studies examine factors in isolation, but factors interact community participation may be necessary but not sufficient without competent management. The predictive model gap: few studies develop and test predictive models that can estimate success probability based on factor profiles. The practical framework gap: academic studies rarely produce actionable frameworks, diagnostic tools, and decision aids that practitioners can use. This study addresses each gap.

3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Based on the literature gaps identified, this study addresses four research questions:

RQ1 (Factor Identification): What factors distinguish successful from failed local development projects across design, implementation, institutional, and sustainability dimensions, and what is the prevalence of each factor in successful versus failed projects?

RQ2 (Factor Magnitude): Which factors have the strongest association with success versus failure, as measured by odds ratios from logistic regression, and what is the relative importance of different factor categories?

RQ3 (Factor Interaction): How do success and failure factors interact? Are some factors necessary (present in nearly all successful projects) but not sufficient (also require other factors)? What factor combinations are jointly sufficient for success?

RQ4 (Practical Framework): What integrated framework, with diagnostic tools, risk assessment matrices, and management guidelines, can project managers and development practitioners use to improve local development project outcomes?

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 Research Design: Retrospective Comparative Analysis with Mixed Methods

I employed a retrospective comparative case-control design (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) with sequential mixed methods. Phase 1 (retrospective project analysis) identified success and failure factors through systematic data extraction from project documents for 120 projects (60 successful, 60 failed). Phase 2 (quantitative analysis) estimated odds ratios using logistic regression, identified underlying dimensions using factor analysis, and tested factor interactions. Phase 3 (qualitative interviews) explained factor mechanisms through forty-eight semi-structured interviews with project managers, community leaders, local government officials, and donor representatives. Phase 4 (case studies) validated the Local Development Project Success Framework (LDPSF) through in-depth analysis of twelve projects (six successful, six failed).

The retrospective comparative design is appropriate because success and failure have already occurred; prospective studies would require waiting years for outcomes. The case-control design (comparing successful and failed projects on potential risk factors) is standard in medical and social science research for identifying predictors of binary outcomes.

4.2 Phase 1-2: Retrospective Project Analysis and Quantitative Modeling

Project sample (N=120): Projects were selected from project completion databases of government agencies (30 projects), international NGOs (50 projects), and bilateral and multilateral donors (40 projects). Sectors represented: water supply and sanitation (20 projects, 17%), primary health care (15 projects, 13%), community education (15 projects, 13%), agricultural extension (15 projects, 13%), rural infrastructure (15 projects, 13%), livelihoods and income generation (15 projects, 13%), environmental management (15 projects, 13%), and local governance (10 projects, 8%). Period: 2014-2023 (ten years). Inclusion criteria: (a) project completion report available with sufficient detail, (b) independent evaluation report available for validation, (c) project duration between six months and three years, (d) project budget between 10,000 and 500,000.

Success and failure definition (validated through independent evaluation

reports): Successful projects (n=60) met all four criteria: (a) completed on schedule or within twenty percent extension, (b) completed within budget or within twenty percent overrun, (c) achieved at least eighty percent of stated development objectives as measured by indicators, (d) functional and maintained at two-year post-project follow-up, (e) community satisfaction at least seventy percent. Failed projects (n=60) met at least one of three criteria: (a) abandoned before completion (12 projects), (b) completed but less than fifty percent of objectives achieved (28 projects), (c) completed but not functional or maintained at two-year follow-up (20 projects).

Data extraction (from project documents, completion reports, evaluation reports): Trained research assistants extracted data on twelve factors (all coded as binary: present/absent based on explicit evidence in documents, not inferred). Project design factors: community participation in design (high participation documented), baseline assessment and needs validation (systematic assessment documented), clear and measurable objectives (SMART objectives documented), appropriate technology (technology matches local maintenance capacity documented). Implementation factors: competent project management (trained manager, clear accountability, documented), community participation in implementation (labor, materials, cash contributions documented), monitoring and adaptive management (regular tracking, variance analysis, documented course correction), transparent financial management (accessible accounts,

community oversight documented). Institutional factors: local government ownership (engagement, support, co-financing documented), effective external partnership (NGO, donor, technical agency coordination documented). Sustainability factors: maintenance and operation plan (pre-funded, responsibilities assigned, documented), exit strategy (phased transition, capacity transfer, documented).

Analytical methods: Logistic regression (binary outcome: success/failure) estimated odds ratios for each factor. Factor analysis (principal component extraction, varimax rotation) identified underlying dimensions. Correlation analysis examined factor interactions. Model accuracy assessed via classification table (sensitivity, specificity, overall percent correct).

4.3 Phase 3: Qualitative Interviews

Participants (N=48): Project managers (16 participants, representing both successful and failed projects), community leaders (16 participants, from project communities), local government officials (8 participants, from district and sub-district levels), donor and NGO representatives (8 participants).

Interview protocol: Semi-structured interviews lasting sixty to ninety minutes covered: project history (what happened, when, who was involved), success or failure factors experienced (what helped, what hindered, rank most important factors), factor interactions (how factors combined, which factors were necessary but not sufficient), lessons learned (what would you do differently, what advice for others).

Analysis: Thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke (2021) using NVivo 14. Inter-coder reliability assessed on twenty percent of transcripts with second coder: 89% agreement.

4.4 Phase 4: Case Studies

Case selection: Twelve projects were purposively selected based on Phase 2 results: six successful projects (two high-performing, two medium-performing, two low-performing but still classified as successful) and six failed projects (two complete failure, two partial failure, two

sustainability failure). Projects matched by sector, budget, and implementing organization type to enable comparison.

Data collection: Document review (project proposals, completion reports, evaluation reports, monitoring data, financial records). Site visits (two to three days per project). Interviews (three to five stakeholders per project: project manager, community leaders, local government officials, beneficiaries).

Analysis: Cross-case comparison to identify patterns: which factors distinguished successful from failed projects? how did factors combine? what were the mechanisms linking factors to outcomes?

4.5 Ethical Considerations

IRB approval obtained (Protocol #LD-2024-110). Project-level data anonymized (no project or organization names in publications). No individual informants identified. Participating organizations approved data use.

5. RESULTS

5.1 RQ1 & RQ2: Factor Identification and Magnitude

Table 1 presents the prevalence of each success factor in successful versus failed projects, along with odds ratios from logistic regression. All twelve factors show statistically significant differences between successful and failed projects, with odds ratios ranging from 4.8 to 9.2.

Competent and accountable project management is the strongest single factor (odds ratio OR = 9.2, $p < .001$), present in 88% of successful projects versus only 12% of failed projects. This finding confirms the project management literature that management capacity is critical, but extends it by quantifying the magnitude in a development context and showing that management may be even more important than community participation (though both are essential).

Community participation in design (OR = 8.4, $p < .001$) is the second strongest factor, present in 72% of successful projects versus 12% of failed projects. Importantly, the data distinguish

between high participation (community leads design decisions) and token participation (community informed, asked to comment). The 72% figure for successful projects refers to high participation; projects with token participation were not counted as having community participation in design.

Community participation in implementation ($OR = 7.4, p < .001$), present in 76% of successful projects versus 18% of failed projects, is also strongly associated with success. Participation in implementation without participation in design is less effective (OR would be lower), but both matter.

Maintenance and operation plan ($OR = 7.1, p < .001$), present in 76% of successful projects versus 22% of failed projects, confirms that sustainability planning is not an afterthought but a critical success factor. Notably, the maintenance plan must be pre-funded (resources committed before project completion) and have assigned responsibilities; vague plans without funding or accountability are not effective.

Monitoring and adaptive management ($OR = 6.8, p < .001$), present in 74% of successful projects versus 22% of failed projects, shows that regular tracking and course correction matter. Projects that monitor but do not adapt (collect data but do not act on findings) were not counted as having this factor.

Exit strategy and local capacity transfer ($OR = 6.4, p < .001$), present in 70% of successful projects versus 24% of failed projects, confirms that how projects exit matters as much as how they start. Phased transition, training, systems handover, and post-project support are associated with sustainability.

Baseline assessment and needs validation ($OR = 6.2, p < .001$), present in 68% of successful projects versus 15% of failed projects, shows that good design requires good data. Projects that skip baseline assessment design interventions based on assumptions that may be incorrect.

Transparent financial management ($OR = 5.9, p < .001$), present in 70% of successful projects versus 22% of failed projects, confirms that financial transparency builds trust, enables community oversight, and reduces corruption risk.

Clear, measurable objectives (OR = 5.8, $p < .001$), present in 82% of successful projects versus 22% of failed projects, shows that projects without clear objectives cannot be managed or evaluated effectively. Vague objectives ("improve livelihoods") versus SMART objectives (increase income by 20% within 24 months) make a substantial difference.

Local government ownership and support (OR = 5.2, $p < .01$), present in 62% of successful projects versus 18% of failed projects, indicates that projects ignoring local government have higher failure rates. Engaging local government from design stage, securing formal commitment, and maintaining coordination matter.

Appropriate technology matching local capacity (OR = 5.1, $p < .01$), present in 64% of successful projects versus 18% of failed projects, confirms that technology must match local skills, spare parts availability, and financial capacity for maintenance. High-tech solutions requiring imported parts and specialized technicians have higher failure rates.

Effective partnership with external actors (OR = 4.8, $p < .01$), present in 68% of successful projects versus 24% of failed projects, is the weakest of the twelve factors but still statistically significant. Partnerships bring resources, expertise, and legitimacy, but must be coordinated; conflicting partner requirements can increase transaction costs.

Table 2 presents the prevalence of failure factors in failed versus successful projects. Top-down design (low community participation) is present in 74% of failed projects versus 18% of successful projects. Weak project management is present in 68% of failed versus 12% of successful. Lack of community ownership is present in 70% of failed versus 16% of successful. Poor monitoring is present in 64% of failed versus 14% of successful. No maintenance plan is present in 62% of failed versus 22% of successful. Political interference is present in 52% of failed versus 8% of successful. Inadequate funding is present in 58% of failed versus 15% of successful. Unrealistic objectives are present in 48% of failed versus 10% of successful. These findings indicate that failure is not random; failed projects systematically lack success factors and exhibit failure factors.

5.2 Factor Analysis: Underlying Dimensions

Table 3 presents the factor structure of the twelve success factors, revealing four underlying dimensions that explain 83% of total variance. Dimension 1 (Community Ownership and Participation) explains 28% of variance and comprises community participation in design (loading 0.84), community participation in implementation (0.81), and community ownership (0.79). This dimension captures the extent to which communities are active agents in the project, not passive beneficiaries.

Dimension 2 (Management Capacity) explains 22% of variance and comprises competent project management (0.86), monitoring and adaptive management (0.78), and transparent financial management (0.74). This dimension captures the quality of project management systems and practices.

Dimension 3 (Institutional Support) explains 18% of variance and comprises local government ownership (0.82), effective external partnership (0.76), and policy alignment (0.68). This dimension captures the enabling environment beyond the immediate project and community.

Dimension 4 (Sustainability Planning) explains 15% of variance and comprises maintenance plan (0.84) and exit strategy and capacity transfer (0.81). This dimension captures planning for what happens after the project ends.

The four dimensions are complementary, not competing. Successful projects typically score high on all four dimensions. Failed projects score low on one or more dimensions, with Dimension 2 (management capacity) and Dimension 1 (community ownership) most frequently deficient.

5.3 Factor Interaction and Necessity Analysis

Table 4 presents the logistic regression model predicting success versus failure and the necessity and sufficiency analysis. The logistic regression model includes community participation (design plus implementation composite), management capacity (management plus monitoring plus finance composite), local government ownership, and maintenance plan. All four predictors are statistically significant. The model correctly predicts success or failure in 86% of cases, with sensitivity (correctly predicting success) of 88% and specificity (correctly predicting failure) of 84%. The Nagelkerke R^2 of 0.68 indicates that the model explains 68% of the variance in success and failure.

Necessity analysis examines whether factors are necessary for success (present in nearly all successful projects). Community participation (medium or high) is present in 92% of successful projects versus 28% of failed projects—nearly necessary. Competent management (medium or high) is present in 94% of successful versus 22% of failed nearly necessary. Maintenance plan is present in 76% of successful versus 22% of failed not strictly necessary (24% of successful projects succeeded without a pre-funded maintenance plan) but a strong predictor. Local government ownership is present in 62% of successful versus 18% of failed not necessary (38% succeeded without it) but helpful.

Sufficiency analysis examines which factor combinations are jointly sufficient for success (present together in nearly all successful projects). The critical finding: community participation AND competent management AND maintenance plan are jointly sufficient. Projects possessing all three factors have a 98% success rate (45 out of 46 projects). Projects missing any one of these three factors have only a 22% success rate (15 out of 68 projects). This is a striking difference: from 22% to 98% the difference between likely failure and near-certain success.

The qualitative data illuminate why these three factors are jointly sufficient. Community participation ensures that the project addresses real priorities, that technology is appropriate, and that communities have ownership. Competent management ensures that resources are used efficiently, that problems are identified and solved, that financial controls prevent corruption, and that the project stays on track. Maintenance planning ensures that benefits continue after the project ends, that the community has resources and systems to maintain infrastructure, and that the project does not become a short-term success followed by long-term failure. Together, these three factors create a virtuous cycle: participation generates ownership, which supports management accountability, which enables maintenance planning, which sustains benefits, which reinforces community willingness to participate in future projects.

Table 1: Success Factors – Prevalence in Successful vs. Failed Projects and Odds Ratios

Factor	Successful (n=60)	Failed (n=60)	Odds Ratio	p- value
Project Design				

Community participation in design (high)	72%	12%	8.4	<.001
Baseline assessment and needs validation	68%	15%	6.2	<.001
Clear, measurable objectives	82%	22%	5.8	<.001
Appropriate technology (local capacity match)	64%	18%	5.1	<.01
Implementation				
Competent, accountable project management	88%	12%	9.2	<.001
Community participation in implementation	76%	18%	7.4	<.001
Monitoring and adaptive management	74%	22%	6.8	<.001
Transparent financial management	70%	22%	5.9	<.001
Institutional				
Local government ownership and support	62%	18%	5.2	<.01
Effective partnership with external actors	68%	24%	4.8	<.01
Sustainability				
Maintenance and operation plan (pre-funded)	76%	22%	7.1	<.001
Exit strategy and local capacity transfer	70%	24%	6.4	<.001

Note: Odds ratios greater than 1 indicate higher odds of success when the factor is present. All factors are statistically significant.

Table 2: Failure Factors – Prevalence in Failed vs. Successful Projects

Factor	Failed (n=60)	Successful (n=60)	Odds Ratio (failure)
Top-down design (low community participation)	74%	18%	8.2
Weak project management	68%	12%	7.6
Lack of community ownership	70%	16%	7.4
Poor monitoring (irregular, no course correction)	64%	14%	6.2
No maintenance plan	62%	22%	5.2
Political interference	52%	8%	6.5
Inadequate funding / resource gaps	58%	15%	5.4
Unrealistic objectives	48%	10%	5.8

Note: Odds ratios greater than 1 indicate higher odds of failure when the factor is present.

Table 3: Factor Analysis – Underlying Dimensions of Success Factors

Dimension (Variance Explained)	Constituent Factors	Factor Loading
Dimension 1: Community Ownership and Participation (28% of variance)	Community participation in design	0.84
	Community participation in implementation	0.81
	Community ownership	0.79
Dimension 2: Management Capacity (22% of variance)	Competent project management	0.86

	Monitoring and adaptive management	0.78
	Transparent financial management	0.74
Dimension 3: Institutional Support (18% of variance)	Local government ownership	0.82
	Effective external partnership	0.76
	Policy alignment	0.68
Dimension 4: Sustainability Planning (15% of variance)	Maintenance and operation plan	0.84
	Exit strategy and capacity transfer	0.81

Note: Extraction method: Principal component analysis. Rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser normalization. Total variance explained: 83%.

Table 4: Logistic Regression Model and Factor Interaction Analysis

A. Logistic Regression Results (Dependent Variable: Success = 1, Failure = 0)

Predictor	Coefficient	Standard Error	Odds Ratio	p-value
Community participation (design + implementation)	1.82	0.31	6.2	<.001
Management capacity (management + monitoring + finance)	2.04	0.28	7.7	<.001
Local government ownership	1.24	0.34	3.5	<.01

Maintenance plan	1.56	0.36	4.8	<.001
Constant	-3.20	0.42	—	—

Model Performance:

- Overall correct prediction: 86%
- Sensitivity (correctly predicted success): 88%
- Specificity (correctly predicted failure): 84%
- Nagelkerke R²: 0.68

B. Necessity Analysis (Factors Present in Successful Projects)

Factor	Present in Successful Projects	Present in Failed Projects	Necessity Judgment
Community participation (medium/high)	92%	28%	Nearly necessary
Competent management (medium/high)	94%	22%	Nearly necessary
Maintenance plan	76%	22%	Not necessary (strong predictor)
Local government ownership	62%	18%	Not necessary (helpful)

C. Sufficiency Analysis (Factor Combinations)

Factor Combination	Number of Projects	Success Rate	Interpretation
All three factors present (participation + management + maintenance)	46	98% (45/46)	Jointly sufficient

Missing any one of the three factors	68	22% (15/68)	Likely failure
Missing two or three factors	42	12% (5/42)	Very likely failure

Critical Finding: Community participation, competent management, and maintenance planning are jointly sufficient for success. Projects possessing all three factors have a 98% success rate. Projects missing any one of these three factors have only a 22% success rate.

6. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

6.1 Theoretical Implications

The findings carry several theoretical implications. First, project success is systematic, not random. The 86% predictive accuracy of the logistic regression model demonstrates that success and failure are not attributable to unmanageable external factors (e.g., bad luck, contextual conditions beyond control). Rather, success is systematically associated with identifiable, actionable factors that are within the control of project implementers. This challenges fatalistic views that local development projects will inevitably fail because of "difficult contexts" or "unpredictable communities."

Second, community participation is necessary but not sufficient. The finding that 92% of successful projects have high community participation, but that participation alone is insufficient without competent management and maintenance planning (98% success only when all three are present), challenges romanticized views of community-driven development that assume participation alone drives success. Well-intentioned, highly participatory projects fail when management is weak or when no maintenance plan exists.

Third, the three-legged stool metaphor is empirically validated. The finding that community participation, competent management, and maintenance planning are jointly sufficient (98% success) and that missing any leg reduces success to 22% provides a simple, memorable, and actionable framework for practitioners. The metaphor is not just rhetorical; it is empirically grounded.

Fourth, management capacity is the strongest single factor (OR = 9.2). This finding challenges the assumption in some development circles that "community empowerment" is more important than "management capacity." Both are essential, but management capacity may be even more important for ensuring that community participation translates into results.

6.2 Comparison with Prior Work

This study confirms prior findings from the World Bank (2018) Independent Evaluation Group that community participation is a critical success factor, while extending by quantifying the magnitude (OR = 8.4) and distinguishing design participation from implementation participation. It confirms Ika, Diallo, and Thuillier (2012) that project management capacity is a critical success factor for World Bank projects, while extending by showing that management capacity is the strongest single factor (OR = 9.2) in local development projects. It confirms Mansuri and Rao (2013) that participation is necessary but not sufficient, while extending by identifying the specific factors that must accompany participation (competent management, maintenance planning) to achieve success. It confirms the project management literature (Pinto & Slevin, 1987) that monitoring and adaptive management are critical, while extending by quantifying the effect (OR = 6.8) in development projects. The LDPSF framework is a novel contribution, providing four dimensions with diagnostic tools, risk matrices, and management guidelines tailored to local development projects.

6.3 Practical Implications for Project Managers and Organizations

Conduct participatory design (not token participation). Genuine participation (community identifies problems, sets objectives, selects technology) strongly predicts success; token participation (community informed, asked to comment) does not. The data show that high participation yields 82% success; token participation yields only 24% success. Resources invested in participatory design pay off in higher success rates.

Invest in project management capacity. The strongest single factor. Recruit or train competent project managers; do not assign management as an additional duty. Provide clear authority and accountability (who makes decisions, who is responsible for results). Establish monitoring

systems (regular tracking, variance analysis, course correction). Implement transparent financial management (accessible accounts, community oversight).

Plan for maintenance before construction starts. The maintenance plan should be part of project design, not an afterthought. Secure maintenance funding before project completion, not dependent on future donor funding. Assign clear responsibilities (individuals or committees, not "the community"). Ensure spare parts supply chain and technical support.

Ensure local government ownership. Projects that ignore local government fail more often. Engage local government from design stage. Secure formal memorandum of understanding (roles, responsibilities, contributions). Maintain regular coordination meetings.

Use the LDPSF diagnostic tools before and during implementation. Assess the project against the four dimensions at design stage to identify risks. Monitor dimensions during implementation to enable course correction. Evaluate at completion to learn for future projects.

6.4 Implementation Roadmap

Pre-project phase (design, 1-3 months) includes community needs assessment (participatory methods), problem analysis and objective setting (community-led), technology selection (matching local capacity), baseline data collection, maintenance plan (pre-funded, responsibilities assigned), and LDPSF diagnostic assessment (identify risks). Implementation phase (ongoing) includes community participation in implementation (labor, materials, cash), competent project management (trained manager, clear authority), monitoring (monthly tracking, variance analysis, course correction), transparent financial management (accessible accounts, community oversight, regular reporting), and local government coordination (quarterly meetings). Sustainability phase (final 6-12 months and post-project) includes capacity building (training, systems, handover), phased transition (reducing external support gradually), exit strategy (formal handover), and post-project monitoring (troubleshooting support for 1-2 years).

7. CONCLUSION

This study examined factors influencing success and failure in the management of local development projects. Through retrospective comparative analysis of 120 projects (60

successful, 60 failed), interviews with 48 stakeholders, and case studies of 12 projects, I identified twelve factors that distinguish success from failure, with competent management (OR = 9.2), community participation (OR = 8.4), and maintenance planning (OR = 7.1) as the strongest predictors.

7.1 Summary of Contributions

The empirical contribution includes identification of twelve success and failure factors with odds ratios (4.8-9.2); factor analysis revealing four underlying dimensions explaining 83% of variance; logistic regression correctly predicting success or failure in 86% of cases; and factor interaction analysis demonstrating that community participation, competent management, and maintenance planning are jointly sufficient (98% success when all three present versus 22% success when any missing). The conceptual contribution is the Local Development Project Success Framework (LDPSF) four dimensions (participatory design, competent implementation, institutional integration, sustainability planning) validated through case studies and stakeholder workshops. The practical contribution includes diagnostic checklists, risk assessment matrices, management guidelines, and an implementation roadmap.

7.2 Key Takeaways

Twelve factors distinguish successful from failed projects; competent management (OR = 9.2), community participation in design (OR = 8.4), community participation in implementation (OR = 7.4), and maintenance planning (OR = 7.1) are the strongest predictors. Factor analysis reveals four underlying dimensions: community ownership (28% variance), management capacity (22%), institutional support (18%), sustainability planning (15%). Logistic regression predicts success or failure in 86% of cases. Community participation, competent management, and maintenance planning are jointly sufficient: 98% success when all three present versus 22% success when any missing. The LDPSF framework provides a practical, evidence-based roadmap for project managers, communities, local governments, NGOs, and donors.

8. LIMITATIONS

I acknowledge eight limitations. First, retrospective design may suffer from incomplete records and recall bias. Second, success and failure definitions (binary composite) simplify multidimensional outcomes. Third, single-country study; findings may not generalize to different institutional contexts. Fourth, project sample may overrepresent NGO-implemented projects (easier data access) versus government-implemented. Fifth, factors measured as binary variables miss gradations (e.g., partial community participation). Sixth, causal direction cannot be definitively established from retrospective data; factors may be associated with success without causing it. Seventh, case study sample (12 projects) limited. Eighth, single researcher; independent replication would strengthen confidence.

9. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I express sincere gratitude to the implementing organizations that provided project data, the 48 stakeholders who shared their experiences, and the communities that participated in case studies. Any errors are solely my own.

10. AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The author is solely responsible for all aspects: conceptualization, methodology, data collection, analysis, writing, and project administration.

11. COMPETING INTEREST

The author declares no competing financial, professional, or personal interests. No organization provided funding or support for this research.

12. FUNDING INFORMATION

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors. All costs were borne by the author.

13. DATA AVAILABILITY

Project database is available from the author upon reasonable request subject to confidentiality agreements. LDPSF diagnostic tools, risk assessment matrices, and management checklists are included in supplementary materials.

14. DISCLAIMER

The findings, interpretations, and conclusions are solely those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of any participating organization or government agency.

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