

CAROL BRUNT

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN INTERNATIONAL NGOs

Exploring
Strategy,
Practice and
Policy



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Exploring Strategy, Practice and Policy

palgrave
macmillan

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ISBN 978-1-137-57305-6 ISBN 978-1-137-57306-3 (eBook)
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-57306-3

Library of Congress Control Number: 2016954154

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To my parents

PREFACE

This book offers a window into human resource practice in the hectic world of international development. It is a compilation of perspectives from management of HR practice and its perceived impact on organisational performance from the field.

Based on a case study of six international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Kenya, the book explores human resource management (HRM) practice and uncovers details about HRM practice by organisations in the development sector not found in NGO management literature. Informed by the author's practical experience in the field, the book offers a unique study of HRM that marries theory and practice. Its contents challenge the reader to reflect on the interpretative application of management theory and stakeholder participation in an ever-changing global environment.

International NGOs play a prominent role in the delivery of foreign aid in regions around the world. Since the end of World War II, non-profit organisations such as Save the Children, CARE International and Oxfam International have been at the forefront of community development and post-disaster rehabilitation. Organisations such as these are essential to ensuring that communities have opportunities for sustainable growth and development. The book is not an assessment of aid effectiveness or organisational performance. Rather, it sets forth a proposition for enhancing organisational performance that recognises human resources as a valuable organisational asset. The book acknowledges the commitment of those who work for International NGOs (INGOs) and their important contribution to organisational performance.

In approaching this research, I drew on my experience as a practitioner. In my roles both as a manager and as a consultant, I had the opportunity to work with multiple INGOs, overseeing staff management, providing staff training, conducting programme evaluations as well as facilitating strategic planning. For over a decade, I have had many informal conversations with friends and colleagues who work for INGOs, UN and donor agencies around the world. A consistent theme throughout all of these conversations was the practice of HRM in the development sector. Why do we do it this way?, its not working, how can we fix it?, where is the equity?—were common themes. What I found as a researcher is that we know little about the actual HRM processes of INGOs. What we do know is that HRM as a management function continues to take a back seat to other management and programmatic functions in the sector.

Living in Kenya at the time, I began to explore the HRM function of INGOs in earnest as part of my doctoral studies. Kenya's link to the development sector has deep roots. As one of the first African countries to achieve independence, Kenya welcomed the arrival of INGOs for their contribution to country's growth and development. Over the next 50 years, the country matured alongside the growing development sector creating, for development researchers, a rare complementarity in which to examine INGOs operating in a supportive environment. Kenya is an important economic driver in the East Africa region. The capital, Nairobi, recognised as a regional transportation centre, is the prime location for regional INGO and UN headquarters including UN-Habitat and United Nations Environment Programme. These factors along with government support provide a stable base for INGO operations. My regional experience and Kenya's strong link to the development sector converged to confirm this as the geographic location of study.

This study presents findings of empirical research that explores two aspects of Purcell's (2003) performance model: recruitment and selection, and employee participation. Through in-depth interviews and access to detailed documentation, I explore the inner workings of INGO management and shed new light on HRM management practice. That HRM for the most part remains rooted in and characteristic of a personnel function rather than assuming a strategic role within each organisation, which is an important finding and one that speaks to the future of the development sector.

What we know is that INGOs provide an effective mechanism for aid delivery. In other words, they do a good job. What we do not know about

INGOs are the details of how they manage their human resources. Specific questions such as “What are their HR management processes?” and “Is there a strategic element in their HRM processes?” guide the research. These questions are scrutinised in the book, informing readers about INGO management through an examination of the HR management policies, procedures and practices.

Ethical considerations incorporated into the study include individual agency confidentiality agreements and practice of anonymity of agency participants to limit identification by readers of the study.

The book appeals to HR management scholars interested in the non-profit sector, to NPO scholars keen to learn more about INGOs and to NGO/INGO management practitioners attracted to the topic of HR management as a learning opportunity. It is a distinctive study whose findings are relevant to international NGOs with global operations. Beyond scholarly audiences in both the for-profit and non-profit management streams and INGO management itself, the book affords aspiring or practicing INGO workers’ insights into HRM practice that are unknown for the most part outside of an INGO’s headquarters or the HR Director/Management in country offices.

To all audiences, the book offers an opportunity for reflection on current HR policies and practices and variances in stakeholder participation and interpretative application of HR policies in international settings. As such, it makes important reading for INGO workers whose commitment to the development sector extends beyond effective service delivery to encompass a multifaceted approach to aid effectiveness that includes organisational growth and development. In this context, INGO workers will be interested in exploring the potential competitive advantages of strategic HRM that recognises the value and contribution of the organisation’s most important asset, its people.

Toronto
May 2016

Carol Brunt

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the staff and management of participant INGOs in Kenya who agreed to be interviewed for this research. I would also like to thank those people in the development sector representing donor agencies, foundations and other INGOs for their contributions. The willingness to share personal experiences and honest assessments of management policy and practice enabled this study to be completed.

Earlier drafts of this work benefited from insightful comments from many colleagues. Dr. Willy McCourt (University of Manchester) was instrumental in pushing me to critically examine my practical experiences and provided strategic direction that guided the research. Paul Barry (University of Manchester) proved enormously helpful in challenging my thinking and reviewing earlier drafts. Colleagues and friends in the development sector both in Kenya and in other parts of the world provided invaluable input and suggestions. Finally, I owe a debt of thanks to my family for their unwavering support.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

| | |
|------|--|
| CIPD | Chartered Institute of Personnel Development |
| DRC | Democratic Republic of Congo |
| EAC | East African Community |
| EU | European Union |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| HAP | Humanitarian Accountability Partnership |
| HR | Human Resources |
| HRM | Human Resource Management |
| ICNL | International Centre for Not-for-Profit Law |
| INGO | International Non-Governmental Organisations |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organisations |
| ODA | Official Development Assistance |
| OECD | Organisation for Economic Development |
| PBO | Public Benefit Organisations Act |
| PIA | People in Aid |
| RBV | Resource-Based View |
| SAP | Structural Adjustment Programme |
| SHRM | Strategic Human Resource Management |
| SME | Small and Medium Enterprise |
| SMT | Senior Management Team |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNEP | United Nations Environment Programme |

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Carol Brunt is an assistant professor in the College of Business and Economics at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, USA, whose expertise lies in non-profit management. Her research interests focus on strategic human resource management, knowledge transfer and learning, and organisational change in the development sector. Also a development practitioner, she has held multiple management positions within the development sector while living and working in sub-Saharan Africa.

Her academic research has been published in peer-reviewed journals including the *International Journal of Human Resource Management* and presented at conferences including the African Academy of Management, the Academy of Management and the International Research Society for Public Management.

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Exploring the Black Box: Inside the Development Sector in Kenya

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This is an introduction to human resource management (HRM) process in the non-profit sector, specifically the development sector in Kenya. The chapter identifies the importance that HRM plays in its contribution to organisational performance and, in so doing, sets the stage for an exploration of HRM policy and practice among select international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Kenya. These organisations are situated within a sectoral culture, one that is shaped by historical practices and partnerships among stakeholders, characterised by resource dependency and impacted by social institutions within the country.

The chapter begins with an overview of the aid industry and the role that NGOs play in the delivery of foreign aid. This provides the reader with a description of the multiple stakeholders in the development sector. Kenya is presented as the African country chosen as the setting for the research study. Its role as a regional economic leader, its recognition as a regional transportation centre, identifies Kenya as a favourable environment for industry, government and international NGOs (INGOs) to establish their headquarters. It is a growing sector whose organisations reflect an organisational culture of commonly held beliefs, norms and values, and a national culture defined by regulatory environment and political support. Moreover, following its independence in 1963, Kenya received support from INGOs that are still operational in country today. As stakeholder

relationships have evolved over the past 50 years, the exploration of these relationships within the context of HRM policy presents findings that may be considered relevant to INGOs operational in other countries.

The conceptualisation of human resources within non-profit organisations (NPO) is not as a monetised asset whose value is reflected in the balance sheet or bottom line, but rather, in collaborative terms, as an asset that provides meaningful contributory value to the functioning of the organisation and recognition that an organisation is only as good as its staff (Edwards 1996; Hudson 2004). HRM practices, such as recruitment and selection, and involvement in organisational decision-making are among the effective HRM practices identified by Purcell et al. (2003) as contributing to organisational performance. These HRM practices form the basis of the exploration of HRM policy and practice among INGOs in Kenya for their identification of human resources through recruitment and selection processes and the meaningful engagement of these resources through participatory management practices.

A staple of INGO theory (Chambers 1986; Covey 1996; Friedmann 1992; Smillie 1995), participation entered mainstream discourse in the development sector through the World Bank's Voices of the Poor report (Narayan et al. 2000). It was widely adopted by donors as a development practice and as noted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), "partnership is now a cornerstone of the new agenda for international aid" (Fowler 2000: 3).

The underlying notion that shapes the book's message is the positive relationship between HRM practice and organisational performance. That a link exists between HRM practice and performance is demonstrated in Purcell et al.'s (2003) study on HRM-performance relationship that builds on existing literature (e.g., Huselid 1995; MacDuffie 1995; Delaney and Huselid 1996; Guest 1997; Pfeffer 1998). The HRM practice-performance link is described by Purcell et al. (2003) as the "black box", its contents unknown and waiting to be discovered within. It is a suitable metaphor with which to introduce the relationship between HRM practice and organisational performance as little is known of this relationship within INGOs themselves.

1.2 ORGANISATIONS IN THE DEVELOPMENT SECTOR

NGOs historically played a significant role in the distribution of assistance to those in need. The oldest recorded NGO, Les Soeurs de la Congrégation de Notre Dame, was established in Canada in 1653 and still operates today in parts of Latin America (Smillie 1995). Other church-based

organisations providing assistance to countries overseas were established in the UK and France in the mid-late nineteenth century. INGOs, such as Save the Children UK and CARE International, were created to provide relief services during wartime and continued to be active following World War II as the West took on an increasingly active role in providing assistance to the world's poor and vulnerable (Suzuki 1998; Smillie 1995).

As stakeholders in global development, INGOs, primarily headquartered in North America, the UK and Western Europe,¹ were largely absent from public discourse prior to the 1980s, and operated on the periphery of the global economy. Beginning in the 1980s, INGOs, as a distinct group of organisations within the larger non-profit sector, increased the size and the scale of their activities in response to humanitarian and longer-term development needs around the world.

The 1980s represented a turning point. From the 1980s onwards, INGOs were favoured by official donor agencies such as the World Bank and the UK's Department for International Development (DfID), as flexible, cost-effective and reliable delivery mechanisms of aid monies (Chambers 1986; Hyden 1983). Since the mid-1980s and the end of the Cold War, INGOs have grown in importance as the scale of their activities increased to meet ever-increasing demands for humanitarian assistance and longer-term development aid. The following countries of Afghanistan, Central African Republic (CAR), Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Iraq, Libya, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, Syria and Yemen were identified as being in Severe Humanitarian Crisis at the end of 2015 based on a measure of "vulnerability, access constraints and current humanitarian need", an assessment that identifies immediate needs in these countries for nutritional support, health services, access to water and sanitation, shelter and protection, in order to respond to acute and severe malnutrition, food insecurity and water shortages (Assessment Capacity Project 2015: 1).

In 2014, international humanitarian response totalled US\$24.5 billion, an increase of 19.5 % over the previous year (Global Humanitarian Assistance 2015). In 2013, 19 % of total funding or US\$3.0 billion (Global Humanitarian Assistance 2015) was channelled through NGOs, both international and national, an increase from 17.3 % (US\$2.1 billion) in 2009 (Global Humanitarian Assistance 2011). Bilateral and multilateral donors are an important source of funding for the development sector. In 2013, the total disbursements by OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) countries to Africa in the form of bilateral aid was US\$29.36 billion (Table 2.2.1, OECD 2015: 4) and from multilateral agencies totalled US\$20.6 billion (Table 2.2.5, OECD 2015: 6).

The rise in importance and visibility of INGOs parallels the decline in service delivery by governments in the Global South. Evidence suggests that aid delivery mechanisms such as bilateral financial transfers and structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) failed to produce the expected results of largely Western donors as the resultant financial constraints on governments in developing countries reduced budgetary capacity to provide essential services to their populations (Dichter 1999; Madon 2000). In its 1991 report, the World Bank emphasised the importance of NGOs as instrumental in “(mitigating) the costs of developing countries ‘institutional weaknesses’” (World Bank 1991: 135). Scholars note that in the absence of effective state mechanisms for aid distribution, donors turned their attention to non-state mechanisms to focus on what Edwards and Hulme (1996: 961) refer to as the “new policy agenda”, composed of market-based development and civil society development as a means of ensuring services reach the poor (McKie 2007; Easterly 2006; Van Rooy 2001; Marcussen 1996).

For their part, INGOs claimed comparative advantage, in part, due to their claims of cultural sensitivity to local conditions and their relations with local communities (Chambers 1996; Dichter 1999; Edwards 1999a; Fowler and Biekart 1996). Today, NGOs continue to contribute to human development through improved access to essential services for Kenya’s population (PBO Task Force 2015: 1).

As an important source of financial resources, the influence of official donor agencies on development practice continued into the new Millennium. In 2005, reported funding for Kenyan NGOs from external donors (excluding foundations) represented 88.4 % of the overall NGO funding basket (Kanyinga et al. 2007: 38). Donor agencies control the disbursement of aid monies from their respective governments in the West to organisations including INGOs whose resource dependency holds them strictly accountable to the donors for the use of donor funds.

In the intervening decade between 2000 and 2010, INGOs continued to grow in size, and to expand their range of services, while facing mergers within the sector, the arrival of new players and a global downturn in the economy that impacted the availability of financial resources. In combination, these factors have contributed to defining what the development sector is today. Social institutions such as regulatory environments and political support influence INGOs as stakeholders within the development sector.

The development sector has experienced tremendous growth rates in Kenya as reflected in its rates of programme spending and employment

creation. Kenya was chosen as the geographic focus of the research in recognition of both its key economic position in the region as a member of the East African Community (EAC) and the choice of the capital, Nairobi, as the prime location for regional INGO and UN headquarters.²

Kenya's real GDP growth rose to 5.7 % in 2013, and while it is estimated to have fallen slightly in 2014 to 5.3 %, projections for 2015 and 2016 forecast increases in GDP to 6.5 % and 6.3 %, respectively (African Economic Outlook 2015). The contribution of INGOs to economic growth is evident. In 2000, the total expenditure of the non-profit sector was 2.5 % of total GDP, representing 2.1 % of employment among the economically active population (Kanyinga et al. 2007).

Kenya's capital, Nairobi, is acknowledged as a transportation centre and the chosen location of multiple donor agencies and INGOs. Nairobi is host to the world headquarters of UN Habitat and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and the regional offices of some of the world's largest INGOs, such as Oxfam International, Save the Children and World Vision. The identification of Kenya as a preferred location for the development community fits neatly with the objectives of this research study providing a significant presence of INGOs as a research population from which to sample.

NGOs, both international and national, are only one of a multitude of organisations in the broader non-profit sector including self-help groups, women's groups, youth groups, cooperatives, foundations/trusts and unions that experienced rapid, significant growth in Kenya between 1997 and 2015. The proliferation of INGOs parallels both the liberalisation of Kenya's economy and the imposition of SAPs.

The size of Kenya's non-profit sector illustrates its magnitude and economic significance. Data from the National Validation Survey completed by the NGO Coordination Board (2009) highlights that the number of NGOs both national and international in Kenya grew from just 836 NGOs registered in 1997 to over 4000 in 2005. This is an increase of nearly 400 % within an 8-year period. Available data confirms that NGO growth, both national and international, has continued steadily in the ensuing years to reach approximately 6500 NGOs operating in Kenya in 2015 (ICNL 2015).

A review of the programming strategies of NGOs, both international and national, identified in Kenya by the National Validation Survey (2009) finds that 53 % of organisations are engaged in service provision, 38 % in

capacity building and 9 % in advocacy. Of the 9 % involved in advocacy work, the majority of organisations are international rather than national NGOs (NGO Coordination Board 2009: 29). National NGOs spend on average 68 % of their income on projects. In comparison, INGOs spend 56 % of their income on projects. In both instances, the balance is spent on administration. This differentiation is, in part, according to the survey, due to the fact that “international NGOs tend to provide higher salaries and provide more benefits for staff and concurrently employ more expatriate staff” (NGO Coordination Board 2009: 34). However, the survey acknowledges elsewhere in its report that there are few expatriates employed by INGOs in Kenya (NGO Coordination Board 2009: 37).

1.3 STAKEHOLDER RELATIONS: DEFINING STAKEHOLDER ROLES

“A stakeholder in an organisation is (by definition) any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organisation’s objectives” (Freeman 1984: 46). This is a definition that underscores the potential impact, importance and value of the contribution of all stakeholders to the organisation as “stakeholders are identified by their interests” and the “interests of all stakeholders have intrinsic value” (Donaldson and Preston 1995: 81). In other words, good managers recognise the importance of stakeholders to the achievement of strategic objectives thus rendering the question of stakeholder identity central to the development of an organisation’s stakeholder approach (Freeman 1984). Management faces a complex challenge in developing their stakeholder approach including recognition of which stakeholders to listen to (identification) and which demands to prioritise (salience) while recognising that “stakeholder-manager relations are not static but, rather, are in constant flux” (Mitchell et al. 1997: 870).

The need to recognise more than just stakeholder identity is reinforced in light of the relationship between stakeholders internal and external to the organisation where internal stakeholders are viewed as the organisation’s link to those external to the organisation (Kotter 1978; Freeman 1984), thus reinforcing the position of internal stakeholders as an important organisational resource.

In applying stakeholder theory and its model of the firm to the management processes of INGOs, the study focuses on stakeholder identity and salience. While employees are fairly recognisable stakeholders, scholars confirm that management is also an important stakeholder group

(Kotter 1978; Freeman 1984). While there are multiple stakeholders in the development sector, staff and management within the INGO as an institution are the primary collaborators in the research study for purposes of data collection consistent with the study's identification of INGOs as the unit of analysis. The identification of these stakeholder groups is related to their direct knowledge and experience of HRM policies and practices within INGOs operating in Kenya.

In the application of Freeman's (1984) stakeholder theory, I identify the internal stakeholder groups (staff and management) who are the organisations' access route to external stakeholder groups such as government, donors, beneficiaries and partner organisations that operate outside of the internal institutional structure of the INGO. One position is that without adequate management of the relationship between internal and external stakeholder groups, there is no effective programming or other activities that can be undertaken by the INGO.

Partner organisations refer to national and local organisations in the country of operation with whom INGOs often form relationships for the purpose of programme implementation and community contact. Local communities and community members as beneficiaries are the recipients of services delivered by INGOs and their partner organisations. Partner organisations and beneficiaries hold stakes in the INGO as an institution despite their position as external stakeholder groups.

An examination of data on operational location finds that INGOs and national NGOs as partner organisations are developing closer working relations whether through coalitions, partnerships or other forms of collaboration. This confirms the trend away from direct programme implementation by INGOs to greater reliance on national organisations that act as local implementing agencies. According to some scholars, partner organisations have benefited from INGO capacity building investment to facilitate their new role. "In many countries, local NGOs are developing a reach and capability for service delivery in poor areas, in slums and among marginalised communities" (Kharas and Rogerson 2012). Data compiled by the author finds parallel operations of both national and international NGOs by geographic region in Kenya. These similarities confirm an increasing practice among INGOs of indirect implementation through reliance on partner organisations as local implementation agencies.

With the exception of Central Province, there is a close match between the NGOs, both national and international, operating in the same geographic region as identified in the National Validation Survey (2009).

When compared against population figures, what is most striking is the high proportion of both national and international NGOs operating in Nairobi despite its relatively small percentage of national population. The rationale for this finding according to Brass (2012) is that “NGO prevalence in Kenya is correlated with areas where the state is strongest—nearer to the capital city and in relatively high-density areas” (Brass 2012: 395).

Employee input achieves the attention of management based on two measures, firstly, of importance to the organisation such as a “threat to the organisation” or ideas that are “interconnected to other (organisational) issues” (Sharek et al. 2010: 4–5), and, secondly, of feasibility of implementation such as proposed solutions to existing problems (Sharek et al. 2010: 6). How management prioritise input is an important contribution to an understanding of organisational decision-making, thus the usefulness of stakeholder salience to the research.

Stakeholder analysis is a programming tool used in the development sector by practitioners during the planning of programme initiatives in order to identify stakeholder groups who have a potential stake in programme development. The introduction of stakeholder analysis provides a solid basis for understanding organisational theory while facilitating the identification of those persons who can provide insights into INGO management process.

1.4 ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE: VALUES AS MOTIVATION

With over 6000 NGOs operational in Kenya (ICNL 2015), it is well worth asking what motivates employees to seek employment within Kenya’s non-profit sector, particularly among INGOs.

From a theoretical perspective, organisational culture is a powerful motivational tool when organisational values, norms and beliefs align with those held by employees. Organisational values are an important and distinctive feature of INGOs as well as a motivational factor for INGO staff impacting leadership, commitment, decision-making behaviour, reporting and performance (Kay 1996; Brinkerhoff and Coston 1999; Hudson 2004; Tandon 2001; Clegg et al. 2011; Drucker 1990).

Kay (1996) describes the intersection of organisational values and leadership in fostering a cohesive organisational culture among staff in the non-profit sector,

It is therefore seen as important that all staff and volunteer members at all levels of voluntary organisations, and service users, need to be enabled to exercise leadership and to develop the skills to participate in this process. For this to be effective, there will need to be an organisational culture which recognises that different meanings, perspectives, interests or values may be held by others; a non-oppressive and anti-discriminatory culture that values diversity of views, and a willingness to learn from others; yet also the recognition of the importance of a negotiated order and the creation of meanings acceptable to others. (Kay 1996: 145)

The distinctiveness of INGOs is, in part, due to the organisational values, shared beliefs and commitment to social change that act as important motivational factors for INGO staff (Brinkerhoff and Coston 1999; Hudson 2004; Tandon 2001). Generally, staff in the non-profit sector tend to be drawn for personal and altruistic reasons to work for a moral cause (Drucker 1990; Kanter and Summers 1987; Korten 1987; Tandon 2001; Beck et al. 2008; Hodson 1992) in an organisational culture that reflects their personal beliefs and norms and shapes their decision-making behaviour (Clegg et al. 2011). Furthermore, non-profit organisations (NPOs) such as INGOs are measured at a higher standard of performance in part because of their service orientation.

To believe that whatever we do is a moral cause, and should be pursued whether there are results or not, is a perennial temptation for non-profit executives—and even more for their boards. But even if the cause itself is a moral cause, the specific way it is pursued better have results. There are always so many more moral causes to be served than we have resources. ... Duty not to squander resources ... has to judge itself by its performance in creating vision, creating standards, creating values and commitment, and in creating human competence. The non-profit institution therefore needs to set specific goals in terms of its service to people. And it needs constantly to raise these goals—or its performance will go down. (Drucker 1990: 85)

However, values as a motivational factor are not without criticism (Fowler and Biekart 1996; Edwards 1999b; Dichter 1999) for their altruistic persuasion in a sector where factors such as conservatism, institutional preservation and personal career growth are identified as alternative sources of motivation.

The term staff commitment, as a measure of motivation, suggests a condition in which staff demonstrate a strong attachment to, and ownership

of, their work that provides significant incentive to perform despite facing challenging and often difficult circumstances (Hodson 1992: 129; Tandon 2001). Organisational values as a motivational factor presume that staff draw on the collective strength engendered by shared values with their colleagues. Evidence shows that reliance on collective strength is particularly true in faith-based organisations (Frontera 2007). Beck et al. (2008) describes the unifying force of shared values whereby, “the implicit assumption is that organisational beliefs are shared by members of the organisation, thus unifying employees and staff and potentially improving organisational performance” (Beck et al. 2008: 156–157).

In contrast to the spirit of collectivity and collaboration engendered by shared beliefs described by Beck et al. (2008) and others, Fowler and Biekart (1996) describe a community that is “developmentally conservative and unempowering, happily fulfilling the traditional roles of social support and welfare provision” that contrasts with the collective strength described earlier (Fowler and Biekart 1996: 128). Critical of the “values as motivation” rationale, Mowles (2007) suggests that INGO management is encouraged to promote a common belief system in order to capitalise on the altruistic values of employees and to appeal to a “higher cause” that directs staff attention away from day-to-day management issues and concerns that could negatively impact staff morale (Mowles 2007).

As INGOs evolve into large, bureaucratised organisations in order to meet ever-growing service delivery demands, the characteristics of professionalised agencies today suggest a degree of hierarchical control that is the antithesis of the shared values on which these organisations were founded. A noted shift in INGO focus towards institutional preservation identified by Edwards in the late 1990s saw a parallel decline in the role of social values, previously a defining feature of INGOs (Edwards 1999b).

The impacts of this value shift have not gone unnoticed by staff. The “new development professionals” (Dichter 1999) that have emerged constitute a segregated class of workers. Among INGOs where “much of the work of aid has been reduced to a set of technical problems to be solved by experts” (Hindman and Fechter 2011: 5), staff require ever more specific skill sets (Billis and MacKeith 1993; Hodson 1992; Igoe 2003). The professionalisation of workers creates a potential for homogeneity of the workforce, where staff at the top of an organisation can be “virtually indistinguishable” (DiMaggio and Powell 1983: 153) across agencies. In the context of the non-profit sector, isomorphism creates an inflexibility and standardisation across agencies that challenges INGOs to provide a

meaningful measure of performance (Kanter and Summers 1987). The characteristics exhibited by the “new development professionals” reflect a lack of career commitment to the development sector (Dichter 1999) that are directly counter to the shared values and beliefs in social change that drew staff to the non-profit sector in its early development. Dichter (1999) summarises the personal career focused trajectory of the “new development professionals”,

To the extent they come from the same pool of young professionals for whom personal (career) motivations are a key, there is a sense of reciprocity inherent in their taking a job with an NGO. For more and more employees of NGOs (and this is the case in developing countries as well), an NGO job is a step in a career, often leading to the private or public sector. (Dichter 1999: 54)

It is clear that the motivational drivers in INGOs have changed over the past 50 years. The literature highlights the early development of INGOs where workers acting on altruistic motives sought employment with organisations driven by a moral purpose in contrast to today’s reality where employees are less likely to be driven by shared values to join large bureaucratic organisations. The motives behind bureaucratisation lie in part with the donor community and INGO resource dependency. The bureaucratisation of INGOs as described in the literature that prioritise internal organisational growth or “institutional imperatives” at the expense of longer-term development priorities (Edwards 1999b) was a partial response to increased donor demands for efficient short-term service delivery and greater accountability through performance monitoring systems such as the results-based measurement (RBM) system. The shift in organisational structure requires professionalised staff and technical experts with new skill sets. Where previously it was the position of moral cause “that shelters it (INGOs) from the need to measure performance” (Kanter and Summers 1987: 164), today accountability and performance monitoring are high on donor agendas.

These motivational drivers identified in the scholarly literature present a generalisable image of the changing organisational culture of NGOs and INGOs globally. It is necessary to supplement this organisational reflection of culture within the context of Kenya’s national culture, as shaped by its social institutions including its regulatory and legislative environment and political support.

1.5 NATIONAL CONTEXT: REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT AND POLITICAL SUPPORT

In Kenya, there are regulatory provisions that provide oversight and management of the development sector as well as labour legislation that governs employer-employee relations. The regulatory environment is composed of the NGO Coordination Act and Regulations as well as provisions found in the Immigration and Finance Acts. The promulgation of the NGO Coordination Act (1990) and subsequent Regulations (1992, 2010), covering both national and international NGOs (see Annex A1 for responsibilities of NGO Coordination Board), demonstrates the government's response to the burgeoning non-profit sector in the country. Included in the Act are provisions for a Regulatory Committee to ensure NGO adoption of a Code of Conduct, for an NGO registry, and for the NGO Coordination Board that would advise the Kenyan government on the aspects of the non-profit sector (Kameri-Mbote 2000: 8–10).

From a legal perspective, there were numerous criticisms (Jillo 2009; Kameri-Mbote 2000) of the Kenyan legislation related to NGO definition³ which excluded many civil society organisations working in Kenya, the certification process and delays in issuance, membership requirements in the NGO Council which oversees the government-imposed Code of Conduct, taxation and other regulatory practices. Jillo (2009) notes that in the absence of clear guidelines, NGOs experience difficulty in meeting legal requirements (Jillo 2009).

The role of the Board in registration of NGOs is perfunctory. There is no clear understanding of the sector by either the government or other stakeholders. The law may not necessarily address this issue; however it is critical that stakeholders are aware of the principles that underpin this sector, especially management and governance structures of NGOs. (Jillo 2009)

Government actions to address the shortfall are reflected in the enactment of the Public Benefit Organisations (PBO) Act (2013), proposed amendments to the new Act both in 2013 and 2014, and the creation of the PBO Taskforce under the Ministry of Devolution and Planning in December 2014. The government's Taskforce sought public input on the content of the new legislation. Nearly 2000 citizens are reported to have participated in ten regional forums. The PBO Taskforce acknowledged the challenges in the earlier legislation and identified the Sessional Paper No. 1 (2006) as "the Government's first step towards developing conducive

legal administrative guidelines to govern NGOs for optimal operations” (PBO Taskforce 2015: 1).

Provisions in the Immigration and Finance Acts define how INGOs should operate in Kenya with respect to international recruitment and taxation. The hiring of expatriate staff requires that INGOs must demonstrate that there are no Kenyans with comparable skills available to fill the position. The results of the National Validation NGO Survey (2009) found that among the INGOs included in the survey, the national/international staff ratio in INGOs was 91 % Kenyan to 9 % foreign nationals (NGO Coordination Board 2009: 37), a finding that confirms that the overwhelming majority of INGO staff are Kenyan nationals.

According to the Finance Act, value-added tax (VAT), income tax and duty must be paid by INGOs unless they have negotiated a government exemption. Negotiated exemptions are difficult to obtain given that “accessing the facility can be a cumbersome process and submission of the request does not necessarily mean that such a request will be granted” (Kameri-Mbote 2000: 11). In 2013, Opposition Members of Parliament led the defeat of the Statute Law (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill, an omnibus bill that, among other provisions, sought to regulate NGO funding in Kenya (Kiplang’at 2013).

Government legislation and HRM practices in the Kenyan public and for-profit sectors can influence the development sector and its management processes. An examination of labour legislation in Kenya identified legislated hiring practices applicable to the non-profit sector.

Labour legislation in Kenya contains provision for minimum wage, freedom of association, recognition, registration and functioning of trade unions and employer organisations, dispute resolution mechanisms, strikes and lockouts, terms and conditions of employment, and protections for Kenyans working abroad and their families. Of the three main pieces of labour legislation,⁴ the Labour Institutions Act (2007), the Labour Relations Act (2007) and the Employment Act (2012, 2007), the latter contains some guidance to Kenyan employers on recruitment and selection. It stipulates actions that require employers to notify Kenya’s Labour Department of pending employment vacancies. Part X—Employment Management, Section 76-Notification of Vacancies (Republic of Kenya 2012) specifies vacancy details to be sent to the employment office including a description of the vacant position, the stated qualifications of the position, location of workplace and the date of the vacancy. Part X, Section 77 stipulates that upon filling the post, the employer is required to notify the same office.

The continual growth in numbers of INGOs has garnered conflicting support from host country governments in the Global South (Dichter 1999; Kanyinga et al. 2007; Kameri-Mbote 2000; Bindra 2008; Bratton 1990). Dichter (1999) and others note the paradox in INGO service delivery. On the one hand, INGOs assume responsibility for the delivery of basic services that governments in the South could not provide to their citizens. In contrast, the assumption of service delivery places more resources at INGO disposal than some governments hold in their budgets, thereby positioning INGOs as powerful decision-makers with greater say over state programmes and disbursements than the state itself. The perceived INGO control over resources and decision-making can present challenges to state authority and potentially strain relations between development agencies and governments. As Bratton (1990) writes the potential for strained relations could be minimised through NGO support for national development goals (Bratton 1990).

Despite the apparent conflict generated by the growing INGO presence and the apparent resource control and policy influence, Bindra (2008) suggests that African governments and their leadership continue to support INGO presence due to the large disbursements of aid monies associated with INGO presence in their countries. Although the Kenyan government uses its own capital sources and engages in long-term economic planning to encourage a degree of self-sufficiency, the country received official development assistance (ODA) that totalled US\$3.2 billion in 2013 (Table 2.1.1, OECD 2015: 2), up from US\$1.3 billion in 2008 (OECD 2010). While this is a significant sum, to put it in context, Kenya does not appear as a most dependent aid country. The DRC, Ethiopia and Tanzania are the top three ODA recipients in Africa in each year between 2011 and 2013 (Table 2.2.7, OECD 2015: 7). According to aid dependency statistics for the year 2009, foreign aid comprised more than 50 % of total government expenditure in Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda and Tanzania (Action Aid 2011: 20).

1.6 CONTENTS OF THE BLACK BOX: HRM AND PERFORMANCE

The purpose of this research is to explore the relationship between HRM and organisational performance in INGOs in Kenya. This purpose presupposes a link between organisational performance and HRM practices of which there is significant debate within the management literature

(Huselid 1995; MacDuffie 1995; Delaney and Huselid 1996; Guest 1997; Pfeffer 1998).

The literature suggests that HRM practices such as employee recruitment and selection and involvement in organisational decision-making have a significant impact on organisational performance (Huselid 1995; MacDuffie 1995; Purcell et al. 2003; McCourt and Eldridge 2003; Kamoche et al. 2004; Boxall and Purcell 2008). According to Boxall and Purcell (2008), “firms need to attract and nurture people with the kind of abilities that will make the firm productive in its chosen sector” (Boxall and Purcell 2008: 140). Involvement in organisational decision-making contributes to opportunities to participate and to employee motivation and commitment to the organisation (MacDuffie 1995; Huselid 1995). The Chartered Institute of Personnel Development (CIPD)-sponsored study identified specific participatory practices that influence employee performance including “having some influence on how the job is done”, “having a say in decisions that affect the job”, “being able to raise matters of concern”, “having a boss who shows respect” and “having managers who are good at leadership” (Purcell et al. 2003: 71).

Employee feedback in the CIPD study identified a desire for opportunities for employees to participate in organisational decision-making. The obvious conclusion is that the recruitment and selection of qualified and capable staff who have the abilities to participate in making sound decisions have the potential to positively impact organisational performance, and ultimately, the realisation of organisational goals and objectives.

1.6.1 Organisational Convergence

There is an apparent convergence between the characteristics of for-profit firms and NPOs that enables Western for-profit management models to be applied to an examination of INGOs. The literature reveals that INGOs are virtually indistinguishable from Western private service contractors in the delivery of development projects and programmes funded by Western governments (Thomas 2007; Edwards 1996; Fowler 1996). The categorisation of INGOs as “public service contractors” (Clark 1991) provides additional evidence of similarities in terminology and practice. These similarities suggest a commonality that strengthens support for and facilitates the adaptability of for-profit sector HRM models to the non-profit sector. The study of HRM practices in the for-profit sector is of paramount importance for its potential contribution to an understanding of how INGOs practice HRM.

Both transnational corporations and INGOs share common key characteristics such as competitiveness, client relations and professionalism that suggests there are sufficient commonalities between the two types of organisations to adapt for-profit HR management theory to the development sector (Dichter 1999; Uphoff 1996; Smillie 1996; Salamon and Anheier 1992; Armstrong 2008). Smillie (1996) states “there are many real similarities between the two entities—in corporate behaviour and global ambition, and in the exercise of trust and control” (Smillie 1996: 97).

The standardisation of management practice, known as ethno-centrism or convergence, includes HRM policies developed at headquarters and transferred to subsidiary offices (Mamman et al. 2009). The practice creates, in effect, mirror images of the organisations worldwide except that, beyond the headquarters location, the field offices operate in a different cultural context than the home culture of the generally Western organisations. The literature presented to this point has adopted Western management theory as the benchmark for comparison between the for-profit and non-profit sectors in the West, and acknowledges that there is sufficient similarity between the sectors that it is possible to adapt the HRM model of the for-profit sector to an examination of INGO management.

1.6.2 Inside the Black Box: A Description

My understanding of the HR management-organisational performance relationship is interpreted through the work of Purcell et al. (2003) entitled “Unlocking the Black Box”. The findings of the CIPD-sponsored study of “the impact of people management on business performance” across 12 UK-based organisations identifies 11 different HRM policy and practice areas linked to organisational performance: “job security, career opportunity, performance appraisal, training and development, recruitment and selection, pay satisfaction, work-life balance, job challenge and autonomy, team working, involvement and communication” (Purcell et al. 2003: 7). These areas combine in a theoretical model that links employee ability and skill (A), employee motivation (M) and opportunity to participate (O) with organisational performance whereby specific HR practices associated with “AMO” are chosen to reflect the context of the specific firm. Purcell et al.’s (2003) study is referenced extensively throughout the literature and forms one of the building blocks of knowledge for this research study.

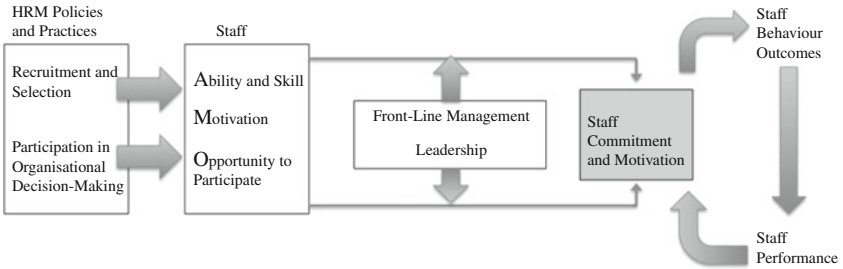


Fig. 1.1 Adaptation of HRM and organisational performance relationship.

Source: Author adaptation of Purcell et al. (2003: 7)

Fig. 1.1 illustrates the relationship between HRM policies and practices and organisational performance (Purcell et al. 2003) and the role of staff ability and skill, opportunity to participate, commitment and motivation that shape staff behaviour outcomes and performance.

Staff recruitment provides an opportunity for organisations to demonstrate that people are a key asset to the organisation. The ability to attract and retain committed staff through a combination of investment in quality staff and placement in the right positions enhances organisational performance (Hudson 2004; Drucker 1990). This study examines both recruitment and selection processes for contributions to the identification of qualified human resource assets. For the non-profit sector, human resources are a primary organisational asset (Akingbola 2006), thus rendering the identification of qualified and capable staff of primary importance to INGOs, and an important area of interest for this study.

This study also focuses on employee involvement in organisational decision-making as an HRM policy and practice for its role in defining an employee's opportunity to participate in organisational decision-making. The element of involvement is chosen for its consistency with INGO's "new policy agenda" (Edwards and Hulme 1996), a participatory approach to programming development that includes longer-term INGO objectives of community empowerment. Further detail of the theoretical underpinnings and practice of the participatory approach in both for-profit and non-profit sectors is presented in Chap. 5.

Purcell et al.'s (2003) model provides evidence linking HRM policies and practices, staff commitment and motivation, and organisational performance (Purcell et al. 2003: 72) and highlights the significant role of management. Employers must be proactive in recognition of potential

changes in employee preferences for HRM policies and practices that can differ over the employee life cycle, and in accordance with their personal values. These shifts in individual preference increase the challenge to employers of identifying the correct mix of policies and practices that will maximise employee satisfaction (Lawrence and Lorsch 1986; Purcell et al. 2003; Boxall and Purcell 2008).

Management, particularly front-line management, is responsible for the implementation of the HRM practices and policies, and for fostering an enabling environment through their leadership that encourages staff commitment and motivation (Pugh and Hickson 1989; Marchington 2001; Mintzberg 1975). Leadership is vitally important to maintain and promote an organisation's values and culture and to ensure that these values are reflected across the organisation in recruitment procedures and other policies (Pugh and Hickson 1989) in order to maximise organisational performance.

Marchington (2001) highlights the importance of front-line managers in ensuring accurate implementation of an organisation's HRM policies and procedures in order to maximise employee satisfaction as lack of front-line management commitment to implementation can undercut the longer-term benefits of a firm's investment in its employees and erode employee satisfaction (Marchington 2001). Furthermore, front-line manager competencies and political skills determine the consistency with which HRM practices are implemented in organisations. Evidence shows that intended policies are not always reflective of actual practices (Sikora 2012). The gap between policy and practice is further highlighted (Tenhiälä et al. 2012) in multiple surveys of HR professionals, the findings of which demonstrate a significant gap between the understanding of HR practices by HRM practitioners and the actual HR practices particularly related to recruitment and selection process.

Mintzberg (1975) identifies multiple managerial skills essential to the role of a good manager,

developing peer relationships, carrying out negotiations, motivating subordinates, resolving conflicts, establishing information networks and subsequently disseminating information, making decisions in conditions of extreme ambiguity, and allocating resources. (Mintzberg 1975: 61)

The development sector holds a similar characterisation of a good manager whereby managers require the combined knowledge of organisational

management, of the non-profit sector, of social change and of international priorities in order to develop appropriate staff development programmes (Billis and MacKeith 1993) and an ability to balance expectations including that of both the staff and the Board of Directors (Kay 1996; Drucker 1990).

This brief overview of the multiple elements of the Purcell et al. (2003) model and the chosen elements for further examination in this research study highlight the determinant role of skilled management as implementer of HRM practice and monitor of employee perceptions of HRM practices.

While this research does not intend to examine organisational performance per se, it is the management process that facilitates organisational performance and employee interpretation of processes that we are interested in examining. There remains much diversity in the literature as researchers attempt to conceptualise the multitude of relationships between HRM practice and performance, a summary of which appears in Annex A2 (Huselid 1995; MacDuffie 1995; Delaney and Huselid 1996; Guest 1997; Pfeffer 1998). This confusion is manifest in questions related to whether organisational performance is studied at the individual or organisational level, the impacts of organisational culture, the influence of employee motivation and commitment on performance, the presence of mechanisms that facilitate employee participation, and the design and implementation of HRM policies and practices themselves. This research explores these issues to further an understanding and conceptualisation of HRM practices within a wider development management debate where management for development “implies a style of management in which any and every activity is undertaken in such a way as to enhance development” (Thomas 2000: 45).

1.7 ADAPTING WESTERN MANAGEMENT MODELS

While the previous section suggested similarities in characteristics between transnational corporations and INGOs that supported the use of Western HR management models from the for-profit sector to evaluate INGOs headquartered in the West, it is appropriate now to consider what happens when Western HR management models are applied in the Global South. One method of achieving this is through an examination of two cultures: organisational culture and national culture. In short, organisational culture is comprised of the organisational environment, values and shared assumptions (Clegg et al. 2011: 221; Schein 2004) in contrast to national

culture (Hofstede et al. 2010). The Western HR management model faces numerous constraints in its implementation as evident from the contrasts in organisational dimensions between developing and developed countries (Kanungo and Jaeger 1990; Mendonca and Kanungo 1996). There are differences in specific characteristics found in the internal and external environments of organisations in the developed and developing countries not least of which are found in the sociocultural environment. These impact on management values and practices (Kanungo and Jaeger 1990).

Much has been written about organisational culture in the context of performance management. Peters and Waterman's (1982) "In Search of Excellence" suggests that a strong organisational culture that encourages shared values and commitment is a cornerstone of organisational effectiveness (Blunt 1991). In contrast, the work of Hofstede et al. (2010) "Cultures and Organisations", based on survey data from one multinational firm operating in 40 countries, suggests that national culture plays a determining role in organisational performance. Among the survey findings are characteristics of "uncertainty avoidance" and "power distance" used to describe staff perceptions in country offices around the world. High levels of "uncertainty avoidance" define employee reluctance to assume personal responsibility with a preference to wait for external factors to determine the course of action (Mendonca and Kanungo 1996: 69) where the degree of uncertainty engendered in organisational change makes outcomes unpredictable (Jaeger 1986: 186). High "power distance" suggests an existing organisational hierarchy led by an authority figure where sub-ordinate roles are strictly defined and adhered to. Activities such as coaching and mentoring of more junior staff and joint problem solving that require employees to perform outside their "fixed positions" are not compatible with employees in countries with high "power distance" (Mendonca and Kanungo 1996: 70).

Consistent with the findings of Kanungo and Jaeger (1990), there is a significantly high level of "risk aversion" among workers in developing countries where, "relatively low individualism that is inevitable in highly collectivistic cultures, implies that family concerns and group attainments take precedence over individual's work concerns and achievements" (Mendonca and Kanungo 1994: 196).

Gerhart and Fang (2005) found that national culture had a smaller impact on firm performance than previously understood. Using Hofstede's data, their findings "suggests a smaller role for country differences than previously claimed" (Gerhart and Fang 2005: 971) and conclude that

organisational culture has greater importance than national culture in defining individual values and actions. Hofstede's work has also been criticised for its presumption of "cultural homogeneity" among nations (Clegg et al. 2011: 241). The work of Gerhart and Fang (2005) reaffirms the assumptions of Delaney and Huselid (1996) that organisation culture is an important variable in establishing a methodology that captures the relationship between HRM systems and organisational performance. I argue that for NPOs such as INGOs, where organisational values can play a determinant role in organisational attractiveness, an organisational culture of shared beliefs and norms is an important factor influencing staff commitment and motivation, and hence, the design and implementation of management processes that enhance organisational performance.

While it is possible to get lost in the specificities of Hofstede et al.'s (2010) research, the literature suggests a cultural conflict between a strong Western-led organisational culture and the individual imperatives of national staff rooted in national culture (Jackson 2009; Nyambegera 2002; Blunt 1982). Increased professionalisation and adoption of Western norms and values by INGOs compounds local staff alienation from the organisations for whom they work as they do not see a cultural connection that links them to their employers (Jackson 2009), particularly true with respect to the lack of representation by minority groups (Nyambegera 2002: 1084). Jackson's comments echo the findings of Blunt (1982) in sub-Saharan Africa whereby employees in the South exhibit greater degrees of alienation than their Western counterparts due in part to "wider discrepancies between Western organised systems and social systems in which they were raised" (Blunt 1982: 77).

Notwithstanding the apparent conflict between organisational and national culture, the literature demonstrates that Western management theories have been promoted by management in the South without question (Jackson 2009; Lewis 2007; Foreman 1999), in "an uncritical emulation and extrapolation from the experiences of the economic growth model of Western countries" (Sinha and Kao (1988) as cited by Kanungo and Jaeger 1990: 1), perhaps even out of convenience (Mendonca and Kanungo 1996: 66) by Western organisations operating in the South.

There are practical implications of adopting Western management theory and practice for the INGOs operating in the Global South. According to Jackson (2009), Western management theory promotes an instrumental view that people are a resource to be used to achieve clear deliverables through the adoption of Western management practices such as participation

and empowerment with the view of human resources as a commodity. “This may create a ‘contractualizing’ organisation culture, where staff themselves use the organisation in an instrumental way” (Jackson 2009: 459). This practice is evident in the description of the “new development professionals” (Dichter 1999), as staff consider INGOs to be a stepping-stone to other employment, thereby weakening their commitment to the organisation. Staff alienation from their national culture directly conflicts with expectations about the organisation where they are employed.

Jackson concludes that if INGOs want to retain their comparative advantage to other organisations in the development sector through claims of cultural sensitivity, they must adopt a cross-cultural approach to management that reflects the individual culture in which they operate, characterised by greater stakeholder involvement (Jackson 2009: 461), a point echoed strongly by Kanungo and Jaeger (1990).

With respect to the applicability of Western HR management theory to Kenya, Kenyan-based studies highlight contrasting practices and employee preferences that appear influenced by national cultural characteristics (Kamoche et al. 2004; Nyambegera et al. 2000; Nyambegera 2002; Dimba 2010). Evidence from Kenya finds that lack of participation in decision-making has contributed to the brain-drain of skilled professional staff (Kamoche et al. 2004). There are indications of ethnicity and favouritism, characteristics that undermine an organisation’s capacity to attract and retain skilled staff and perhaps contribute to homogeneity in the workforce.⁵ Furthermore, HRM practices are characterised as “personnel administration and record-keeping” (Kamoche et al. 2004: 90), whereby personnel managers primarily manage downwards, interacting with junior staff more often than upwards with senior higher management, characteristic of high “power distance” and authoritarian management which does not encourage a “strategic integration” of HRM.

A study of eight multinational, state and for-profit domestic firms in Kenya covering 274 employees examined whether cultural values impact on the HRM preferences of individual employees (Nyambegera et al. 2000: 641). Among the findings are employee preferences for financial over non-financial rewards, such as financial rewards based on merit as opposed to seniority, greater HR empowerment with minimal layers of management, access to senior management and reward for qualifications and skills (Nyambegera et al. 2000: 650–657). A study among 50 foreign multinational organisations in Kenya finds that individual HRM practices such as training and development and compensation packages correlate

positively with organisational performance but there is no evidence of strategic human resource management (SHRM) (Dimba 2010).

Kamoche et al. (2004) questions the adaptability of Western HR management theories to African society. He finds that the distinctiveness of African society and culture adds pressure to organisational decision-making and challenges the application of Western theory or universal good practice. In particular, he comments,

What is lacking is knowledge at the level of the organisation, in particular how to apply HR techniques which are not only suitable for the context in question but which are effective in improving organisational performance. In the absence of reliable knowledge on the HR situation in Africa, investors and expatriate managers are likely to make inappropriate decisions and to ignore the unique features of the African context as they import their thinking and practices. (Kamoche et al. 2004: xviii)

His comments highlight the need for organisations to recognise external factors when developing a suitable HRM approach, one that includes national culture as a defining factor in the link between HRM practices, employee behaviour and expected outcomes of organisational performance (Pfeffer 1998; Mendonca and Kanungo 1996: 65). This is particularly true in what Blunt (1991) identifies as a “fragmented” culture, one that is characterised by “systemic corruption, particularism and a preference for external demands from family and tribe over organisational goals”, characteristic of many organisations in developing countries (Blunt 1991: 57), where competing pressures reinforce the fragmentation such that “specific and opportunistic cultural coherences form at different times around different issues” (Clegg et al. 2011: 237). This characterisation is consistent with the literature’s description of African cultural values as group oriented and paternalistic that lead employees to provide employment opportunities, financial or other support to family and tribal members (Nyambegera 2002; Mulinge 2001).

While commonalities may exist between transnational corporations and INGOs to suggest that Western management tools are applicable across sectors, national cultural differences between the West and the Global South impact on the implementation of imported Western HR management practices, missing the “complex social structure in multi-ethnic societies” (Nyambegera 2002: 1086), and should be taken into consideration prior to their introduction in developing countries such as Kenya.

1.8 STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

The book is comprised of six chapters that collectively explore human resource policies and practices among INGOs in Kenya. Beginning with Chap. 1 titled, “Exploring the Black Box”, the topic of HRM practices is presented to the reader as the main subject situated within the geographic region of East Africa.

The chapter describes the institutional context of INGOs with reference both to growth and development globally and to the Kenyan setting. The chapter presents stakeholder theory and its application in the interpretation of stakeholder relations. As value-driven organisations, INGOs have changed in how they do business influenced by factors in the external environment. Regulations, government support and funding sources have impacted sector growth and location of operations.

Purcell et al.’s (2003) model identifies 11 HRM practices that impact performance of which recruitment and selection and involvement in organisation decision-making are chosen for purposes of comparison between HRM practices in the for-profit and non-profit sectors. Data is readily available and these are easily measurable factors when undertaking a comparative review. Recognition of organisational convergence between transnational corporations and INGOs facilitates the comparison of the identified HRM practices. The adaptation of Western management models to the development sector in Africa is debated in the literature, and key elements of the debate are highlighted including the issue of organisational culture.

The second and third chapters entitled “Recruitment” and “Selection” can be read concurrently. These chapters describe the HRM policies and practices, specifically the recruitment strategies and selection procedures used by INGOs in the study. An examination of the recruitment process relies on Boxall and Purcell’s (2008) evaluative model to examine job posting procedures and recruitment strategies. Selection policies and practices focus on the application procedure and selection methods, respectively, to provide details of the hiring process. The role of selection panellists provides further insights into HRM processes. Opportunities for internal promotion are also presented as evidence of employment security provisions for existing staff.

The fourth chapter, “Employee Participation”, introduces the practice of participation and how it has evolved in both the for-profit and development sectors from encouragement of employee participation in organisational activities within defined boundaries to an empowerment model that

seeks to develop an enabling environment to partnership relations that denote a shift in stakeholder relations to an ownership model. I compare the organisational discourse of the for-profit sector to the development discourse across agencies on participation in organisational decision-making.

In recognition that involvement in organisational decision-making is one of the HRM practices identified in the HRM-performance model (Purcell et al. 2003), this chapter examines INGO policies and practices of participation and contrasts involvement by staff and beneficiaries. An examination of partnership policies is facilitated by Kanter's (1994) criteria of effective alliances. Key themes of employment and stakeholder participation define the analysis of participatory mechanisms, stakeholder use of participatory mechanisms, types of input including contribution to strategic planning, and an examination of the power differentials in stakeholder relations between management, staff and beneficiaries.

The analysis of research findings presented in the previous three chapters is found in Chap. 5, entitled "Implications for INGO Management Process". The recruitment and selection process of INGOs face some challenges in comparison to Western management theory and industry practice. A recent change in partnership relations with the adoption of partnership agreements is discussed. Management discourse illustrates their perceptions of participation and highlights the state of stakeholder relations based on elements of power and control. The study findings are analysed using the Purcell et al. (2003) model and highlight the potential implications and impact of these HRM policies and practices on organisational performance.

Chapter 6, final chapter, is titled "What Have We Learned?" This chapter provides concluding thoughts and reflections, drawing on the findings of agency policies and practices presented in the previous chapters. The new information generated by the empirical research contributes to knowledge of select HRM policies and practices of INGOs in Kenya and serves to highlight existing contradictions between policy and practice that are endemic in these organisations. The analysis has unearthed multiple contradictions in how HRM is practiced and opportunities for staff participation in organisational decision-making. From a stakeholder perspective, the structural shift offers a more participatory approach that is not reflected in practice. A proposed procedural shift would suggest that HRM be strategically integrated with organisational objectives. In both instances, these identified organisational shifts recognise the valuable contribution of staff to the realisation of organisational objectives.

NOTES

1. Actionaid International is the only international development organisation with its headquarters on the African continent to which they moved in January 2004.
2. The EAC, comprised of Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi, was created on July 7, 2000. The aim of the EAC as an inter-governmental organisation is to encourage cooperation among partner states and to create a series of integrated processes that will mutually benefit all members. To this end, the country members have created a Customs Union in 2005 and are working towards a common market agreement and monetary union with the eventual aim of creating a political federation.
3. The Act defines NGOs as, “a private voluntary grouping of individuals or associations not operated for profit or for other commercial purposes but which have organized themselves nationally or internationally for the benefit of the public at large and for the promotion of social welfare development, charity or research in the areas inclusive but not restricted to health relief, agricultural, education, industry and supply of amenities and services.”
4. The Ministry of Labour and Human Resources Development in Kenya announced new legislative initiatives to extend worker protection in areas of occupational health and safety, child labour, employment courts, dispute resolution as well as employment creation through incentives for small business development. New initiatives consistent with new Constitution were outlined in Labour Perspectives Newsletter released in March 2012 (Republic of Kenya 2012).
5. Nyambegera (2002) cites both Kamoche and Blunt in the discussion of ethnic homogeneity, “Kamoche disagrees with Blunt’s suggestion that ethnic homogeneity acts as a positive support mechanism” (Nyambegera 2002: 1082).

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Recruitment

2.1 INTRODUCTION

It is generally accepted that HRM practices have significant impact on organisational performance. From a systems perspective, human resources are the necessary inputs to the production process. In the non-profit sector, staff take on greater strategic importance, as they are not replaceable by technology or additional financial resources, and organisational performance depends on people (Akingbola 2015).

Recruitment and selection represent the first stage in the identification of human resources for a firm. As the literature suggests, the practice of employee recruitment and selection impacts organisational performance (McCourt 2006; Kamoche et al. 2004; McCourt and Eldridge 2003; Boxall and Purcell 2008). The study of recruitment (McCourt 2006; McCourt and Eldridge 2003; CIPD 2009; Boxall and Purcell 2008; Guest and Conway 1999; Huselid 1995) explores the inner workings of staff hiring and identification of qualified and skilled candidates. The rationale for the assumption of good practice in recruitment and selection lies in improvements in staff quality that directly contributes to improvements in organisational performance (McCourt and Eldridge 2003) so it is useful to explore the specificities of each element of the recruitment and selection process.

Among non-governmental organisations, particularly those in the development sector, there is little extant literature or published research on HR management process or more specifically, the recruitment and

selection process. “There is little work which examines what actually goes on inside these organisations” in reference to internal management process such as staffing (Lewis 2007: 198). Management practices may often be adopted more to reflect donor priorities than organisational needs (Tucker and Parker 2013).

For purposes of exploring recruitment strategies of INGOs, the evaluative model of Boxall and Purcell (2008) facilitates a systematic examination of strategies. The findings from such an examination reflect the prioritisation of the overall recruitment process within an organisation’s structure. Their evaluative model provides an entry point for exploring the multiple stages within the process of recruitment itself. As the first of two chapters on the hiring process, this chapter focuses on recruitment strategies that can be classified according to the organisation’s degree of management capacity to mount an effective recruitment process and of their power within the labour market to attract skilled candidates (Boxall and Purcell 2008). These two factors, management capacity and the labour market power, form the basis of the discussion in this chapter.

2.2 THEORY: MANAGEMENT CAPACITY IN THE LABOUR MARKET

The literature suggests that the practice of employee recruitment impacts organisational performance (McCourt 2006; Kamoche et al. 2004; McCourt and Eldridge 2003; Boxall and Purcell 2008). Recruitment strategies shape a firm’s hiring procedure. Effective recruitment strategies ensure that the right person is identified and hired for the position in the expectation that, ultimately, they will contribute to enhancing organisational effectiveness and performance (Lepak and Snell 1999).

The process of recruitment can be considered a form of marketing of the firm to potential candidates. The recruitment process is based on firm needs from which decisions will be made that shape and define the content of the recruitment strategy. Questions such as “Will it be an open process that seeks to attract candidates from a wide audience or is it a more targeted approach, focused on a specific segment of the labour market?” are a starting point for decision-making. For example, if there is an immediate need to hire for a replacement, firms may opt for a more targeted approach, using a specific message aimed at a particular audience in order to attract candidates with specific skills, knowledge and abilities that can contribute immediately to meet firm needs (Heneman III et al. 2015: 211).

Boxall and Purcell's (2008) evaluative model is useful for its facilitation of an exploration of the recruitment process. The model supports an examination of recruitment strategies and management influence on the prioritisation of the overall recruitment process within the organisation's structure where management's role is defined by their contribution and central to the process itself.

Firm recruitment strategies can be classified according to the organisation's degree of management capacity to mount an effective recruitment process and of management power within the labour market to attract skilled candidates (Boxall and Purcell 2008) as illustrated in the figure below. These factors are inextricably linked in management's creativity in the use of firm resources to favourably position itself in the labour market, thus earning it sufficient power to attract candidates to the firm. It is an intricate balancing act that shapes the recruitment outcomes, but one that is essentially defined by available financial resources and management's wherewithal to utilise them effectively.

Boxall and Purcell's (2008) evaluative model classifies recruitment strategies according to firm presence in the labour market and management's ability to engage in the hiring process or management capacity.

Management capacity reflects the resource levels available to the firm for recruitment purposes. It also measures the recruitment approach to its candidate pool and whether the pool is defined as heterogeneous (recruiting from a wide talent pool) or homogeneous (recruitment from a narrow talent pool). In combination, these factors differentiate the HR expertise exhibited by the firm. Management capacity is ranked low if it adopts a homogeneous approach to hiring and has little access to resources. Management capacity is ranked high if it adopts a more heterogeneous approach and is well resourced.

Labour market power refers to the ability of the organisation to attract top candidates. Firm position in the labour market is dependent upon its management capacity for it is the decisions made by the firm to adopt a heterogeneous versus homogeneous approach to hiring and access to adequate resources that will ultimately influence the firm's position. In short, management capacity is defined by the use of resources for external and/or internal recruitment and the degree of diversity among candidates. An exploration of the labour market reflects a comparison of the position salary to the local labour market.

As presented in Fig. 2.1, the two factors, labour market power and management capacity, are ranked on a high/low scale. Organisations classified

| | | Management Capacity | |
|---------------------|------|---------------------|------------|
| | | Low | High |
| Labour Market Power | Low | Muddling Through | Flexible |
| | High | Status Quo | Autonomous |

Fig. 2.1 Classification of recruitment strategies.

Source: Author adaptation of Boxall and Purcell (2008: 178)

as “status quo” have significant power in the labour market to recruit but low management capacity, meaning the organisation is conservative, recruiting from a homogeneous group and underutilising its resources. For an organisation that is “muddling through”, it has both low levels of management capacity and little power to recruit in the labour market. These organisations are primarily SMEs, with little HRM expertise and an inability to offer attractive employment conditions. Organisations with high management capacity but low levels of power in the labour market are classified as “flexible” with significant HRM expertise in comparison to competitors. The “autonomous” organisation has both high levels of management capacity and labour market strength and uses “all possible channels” to advertise their postings to recruit from a heterogeneous group of candidates (Boxall and Purcell 2008: 178) where a heterogeneous workplace reflects diversity “in terms of race, ethnicity, beliefs, culture, gender, age, country of origin and physical ability” (Mamman 1995: 529).

The Boxall and Purcell (2008) model presumes that labour market power is reflective of high salary rates as a means to attract potential candidates. Hansmann (1980) suggests that for those employees that are more intrinsically motivated, that is, for individuals for whom financial gains have lesser significance, lower wages can function as a screening device in attracting intrinsically motivated employees over those for whom financial gains are more important. As described in Chap. 1, intrinsic motivation reflects employee commitment to NPOs based on the values-orientation. Employees are drawn to these organisations for the intrinsic benefits derived from their employment with a NPO. However, since the mid-1990s, non-governmental organisations, a sub-set of NPOs on which we

focus the study, have undergone increased professionalisation and bureaucratisation. It is a process that has refocused staff attention inward, characteristic of the “new development professionals” in the development sector (Dichter 1999). Boxall and Purcell’s (2008) model of classification of recruitment strategies provides a useful and important framework with which to measure labour market power as salary remains an important priority across sectors.

The recruitment approach adopted by firms contributes to shaping the candidate pool. Decisions as to whether to recruit from a wide or narrow pool of candidates impact the job-posting process. Where and when the job is posted depends on decisions on resource allocation made by the organisation. As described by Marchington and Wilkinson (2005), there are three types of job-posting procedures: closed, responsive and open searches. Closed searches provide a narrow scope for recruitment relying on word of mouth/networks, schools/colleges/universities and recruitment agencies to identify potential candidates. Responsive methods rely on existing information on file that the HR staff review for potential candidates including speculative applications. Open searches have a broader catchment as positions are advertised through local/national newspapers, specialised press, job centres, radio and television advertisements and employer websites.

2.3 FOR-PROFIT SECTOR: RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

In order to attract top candidates, firms must be cognisant of labour market conditions when deciding on recruitment strategies. A tight or limited job market can alter firm approach to recruitment and the chosen strategies to attract top candidates. The shift in the employment landscape in North America from traditional life-long employment with a single employer to increased individualisation of the employment cycle (Koene and Purcell 2013) including temporary employment (Lepak and Snell 1999; Pfeffer 1984) is reflected in the approaches adopted by firms to attract potential candidates.

2.3.1 *Use of Resources*

The changing face of the employment landscape requires an appreciation of firm decision-making when it assesses whether to look internally or to enter the external market for new hires. The decision to hire internally or

externally reflects a cost-benefit analysis for firms that hinges on organisational priorities as to the use of financial resources and desired knowledge acquisition. The allocation of time and resources is necessary both during the recruitment process and subsequent introduction to the firm upon hiring (Dong et al. 2014). While internal promotion is less costly and encourages knowledge retention within the firm, external hires, though more expensive, can bring new knowledge and creativity to firms (Bidwell and Keller 2014). In the latter instance, it can make an external hire an attractive option.

One of the first determinants of use of resources is the choice of job-posting procedures. A recruitment and retention study of UK organisations from the manufacturing and production, private, public and voluntary sectors found that the most popular job-posting methods are the use of the corporate website (78 %), local newspapers (70 %), specialist journals and trade press (55 %), referrals from employees (46 %) and national newspapers (31 %) (CIPD 2009). These are characteristic of open searches meant to attract from a wide pool of candidates.

As a more closed search method, referrals from employees are a popular recruitment method. Word of mouth has been found to have a positive impact on applicant perceptions of the hiring organisation and subsequent application decisions (Van Hove and Lievens 2009). The benefits of this form of recruitment include strengthened relationships with current employees and decreased likelihood of premature departure (Heneman III et al. 2015).

Submitting an application for a position can be a daunting process and firms are exploring ways to decrease candidate uncertainty inherent in the recruitment process. Research suggests that the inclusion of a firm's diversity policies in job postings can have a positive impact on candidate perceptions of the firm (Walker et al. 2013) and encourage candidates to submit their applications.

In contrast to external recruitment strategies, the adoption of an internal recruitment strategy provides an opportunity for the firm to signal that it supports the notion of employee advancement, career progression and development. Hiring internally encourages the use of existing capacities (Heneman III et al. 2015; Lepak and Snell 1999) and builds on the common beliefs, values and norms inherent in organisational culture to strengthen bonds between employees while reducing transaction costs. "Core employee skills that are central to a firm's competitiveness should be developed and maintained internally" (Lepak and Snell 1999:

34), given the benefits derived from employee collaboration. In seeking to retain knowledge within the firm, the use of development assignments within the firm can enhance existing human resources, thereby reducing the likelihood of turnover outcomes (Lepak and Snell 1999).

2.3.2 *Labour Market*

The choice of recruitment strategies is tied to existing labour markets as the state of the economy impacts on labour availability. In a tight market, employers are more likely to use recruitment methods that increase the number of applicants (Russo et al. 2001: 555) such as increased compensation. Human resource professionals in the USA report that in both manufacturing and service sectors employers increased new hire compensation due to increased recruitment difficulties. Over fifty percent of HR professionals (2015) face challenges in attracting highly skilled candidates, with employers offering more money to appeal to top candidates (SHRM 2016a).

Skill shortages influence the choice of recruitment strategies. In the UK, HR professionals report that four fifths of firms increased compensation rates for talent between 2013 and 2015 with the most common shortage found in specialist/technical skills (CIPD 2015: 4). The survey reports that the strong labour market in 2015 resulted in increased turnover in the private sector as employees seek other opportunities (CIPD 2015: 32).

Attracting skilled and specialised workers has also proven challenging in East Africa. Between 2001 and 2006, as real wage growth in the private sector surpassed that of the public sector, the growing attractiveness of private sector wages created opportunities for experienced employees to migrate to the private sector (Adams et al. 2010). Poor recruitment practices seemed to “undermine the capacity of organisations to attract and, more importantly retain skilled and specialised workers” (Kamoche et al. 2004: 96). The Kenya Country Report for the 2014 Ministerial Conference on Youth Employment (Kaane 2014) recognised the mismatch between education/training and labour market requirements as contributing to skill shortages.

The informal sector comprises the majority of positions with less than 20 % of total employment held by wage and salaried employees in Kenya in 2008 (Omolo 2010). By 2011, the ratio of formal to informal sector employment remained at 20/80 (LO/FTF Council 2014).

Regardless of the labour market, firms that have difficulty in filling certain positions will always have to engage in aggressive recruitment. The mobility and flexibility of talented candidates means they will always be able to compete for positions (Rynes and Cable 2003).

2.4 RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES AMONG NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS

The analytical tools used to explore HR practices in the for-profit sector also provide a useful framework with which to examine INGO HR policies and practices. The exploration of INGO human resource policies and practices is for the most part uncharted territory. What we do know is that evidence demonstrates that the development sector has been hesitant to adopt a “business approach to management” (Lewis 2007; Dichter 1989; Bradley et al. 2003). Notwithstanding the importance of organisational performance to INGO management, Dichter (1989) finds that NGOs fail to recognise the benefits of HRM practices because their management skills do not extend to the identification of innovative HRM practices and the implementation of HRM systems. His assessment is based on findings from the non-profit sector of an absence of planning skills, poor recruitment practices and limited cultural knowledge. From a financial perspective, Bradley et al. (2003) rationalise that the lack of a clear bottom line similar to the profit motive among for-profit organisations is a “disincentive” for NGOs to use administrative fees to invest in organisational development despite evidence that continued organisational investment is necessary to recruit and retain sufficient staff to contribute to realising organisational performance (Edwards 1996a; Drucker 1990; Hudson 2004).

Despite the emphasis that the large INGOs place on human resources in their global strategies, with documentation stressing that human resources are a valuable resource, Ronalds (2014) writes that, “While each of these organisations correctly identifies the critical place that human resources play in their success, their operational reality appears to fall well short of their rhetoric” (Ronalds 2014: 118). His broad assessment highlights a lack of attention to global talent management systems. In his words, this limits INGO capacity to, “effectively compete with other actors for the best people and make the most of their existing talent, these processes will need to function globally” (Ronalds 2014: 118). The underlying message behind these statements is that human resource management processes in the non-profit sector, specifically among INGOs, could be improved.

Drawing on his own personal experience, Suzuki (1998) describes staff recruitment practices in NGOs as ambiguous and inconsistent, due to inappropriate hiring criteria, discrepancies in employment terms and failure to match the person to the position. Overall, he finds that the hiring process is unclear (Suzuki 1998). This characterisation of HRM draws on his personal experience to capture perceived shortcomings in the NGO hiring process. Its first-hand account enables the reader to appreciate his experience in realistic terms. Project needs are prioritised over organisational needs in staff identification and hiring within organisations dependent on project-based funding (Suzuki 1998). In other words, an ongoing focus on project design and development is necessary in order to meet the resource dependency of the organisation. Edwards (1999b) suggests that it is the “institutional imperative” or organisational needs rather than the “development imperative” or project results that determine organisational priorities.

The growth of INGOs from small, localised project-based organisations in their early development to large, multifaceted organisations with a diverse programming base, as described in Chap. 1, shifts the skill requirements. Van Rooy (2001) writes that staff require a variety of new skills in the changed organisations which are not evident among INGO staff skill sets (Van Rooy 2001). This fact stems in part from the new professionalisation among NGOs. Understandably hiring needs have changed with leadership and technical skills identified as among the shortcomings both at INGO headquarters and in country offices (Ronalds 2014).

Faced with apparent shortfalls in HRM systems and new skill requirements for staff, there is evidence of a degree of adaptation by the non-profit sector in its recruitment practices. By the mid-twenty-first century, job posting in the UK’s non-profit sector finds greater use of organisational websites, newspapers, journals and trade press in contrast to the private sector’s use of recruitment consultants and professional networking sites (CIPD 2015). There is an increasing use of social media as a means of recruitment in the non-profit sector (Akingbola 2015). In the USA, there is a distinct contrast in the use of social media as a recruitment tool between NPOs and for-profit firms. Less than one quarter of NPOs use social media as a recruitment tool in contrast to over three quarters of privately owned for-profit firms (SHRM 2016b). In part, the changing recruitment practices with increased emphasis on the use of social media as a recruitment tool could be a response to a new breed of non-profit managers, who have grown up in a technologically defined world (McGinnis Johnson and Ng 2015).

An examination of recruitment strategies among INGOs in Kenya provides empirical data that is important to an understanding of how INGOs have addressed the increased need for qualified and capable staff.

2.5 INGO EXPERIENCE IN KENYA

In order to fully appreciate the range and scope of the recruitment strategies adopted by INGOs in Kenya, an examination of management capacity as well as organisational strength in the labour market was completed using Boxall and Purcell's (2008) evaluative tool. To reiterate, the tool uses a high/low rating scheme to evaluate and rank management capacity according to its ability to recruit from a homogeneous versus heterogeneous group, and its use of resources in the recruitment process. A similar high/low ranking is then used to measure the second element of the tool, labour market power as reflected in the strength of the organisation to attract skilled candidates, often based on an organisation's salary package.

The result of an assessment of management capacity and labour market power within six international INGOs in Kenya is presented in Table 2.1. In-country management of these agencies share their interpretation of the recruitment process. Their insights further contribute to our understanding of HR management procedures.

Table 2.1 should be interpreted with caution for two reasons. While the empty cells reflect a lack of information from available sources, it does not mean that no one in the organisation had access to that information. Rather it suggests that valuable information that could strengthen the recruitment process is not in the hands of the decision-makers that could benefit from it. Secondly, I am not seeking to compare the agency

Table 2.1 Findings of agency capacities and power to recruit

| <i>Agency</i> | <i>B</i> | <i>C</i> | <i>D</i> | <i>E</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>G</i> |
|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| <i>Management capacity</i> | | | | | | |
| (a) Homogeneous target group | | | | | * | * |
| (b) Heterogeneous target group | | * | * | | * | * |
| (c) No. of recruitment methods used by the agency (mixes internal and external resources) | | 5 | | 5 | 3 | 3 |
| <i>Labour market power</i> | | | | | | |
| (a) Salary comparable to local market | | | | * | | * |

Source: Author compilation based on research findings

practices to each other but rather to appreciate the trends within the sector based on INGO practice.

Exploring the data in Table 2.1, there are some interesting trends. The first measure of management capacity reflects agency ability to hire persons with talent and the potential to bring new ideas to the organisation. As a measure of homogeneity versus heterogeneity, I want to understand whether the organisation is “recruiting from the same social strata and age groups, without challenging the way this can discriminate against certain kinds of job-seekers” (Boxall and Purcell 2008: 177–178). A majority of organisations (**Agencies C, D, F and G**) are found to recruit candidates from a range of age, gender and ethnic backgrounds with one exception.

In Northeastern Province, as highlighted by two agencies, an under-representation of staff from local communities encourages organisations to conduct targeted hiring in the region. The interviewees stress that the recruitment process is open to everyone and that recruitment does not prioritise hiring from one particular ethnic, gender or other group. Kenya is comprised of 42 different tribes, and history demonstrates evidence of nepotism and preferential hiring practices (Nyambegera et al. 2000). Interviewees do not mention these issues during the interviews, perhaps due to their sensitivity. Agencies suggest that they make concerted efforts to ensure that recruitment processes are free, fair and accessible to all.

While agencies recognise the benefits of opening up recruitment to the widest possible audience in order to increase heterogeneity among their workforce, they also note the requirement for representativeness that in some instances requires targeted recruitment. Preferential hiring practices for Northeastern Province are acknowledged by all INGOs with programming in that region. All parties recognise that this province was disadvantaged by limited access to resources and development. As such, targeted recruitment occurs for positions in communities in the Northeast in an affirmative action-type practice that seeks to provide access to the local population to compete for positions. For example, it is not possible to hire a driver for Dadaab Town in Northeastern Province from the capital, Nairobi, in Nairobi Province in the south. Some organisations have taken steps to actively invite local community members to oversee the hiring process in the Northeastern Province in order to increase transparency.

Nonetheless, there is evidence of sensitivity among the interviewees in discussing recruitment and community representation in reference to Northeastern Province. The following examples illustrate the sensitivity of the issue. When working in the Northeastern Province, it is necessary to

recognise the importance of clan issues according to an Assistant Country Director,

(W)hile its best to open it (hiring) to everybody ... we are going to look at recruitment very clearly in terms of the ethnic composition of teams ... in certain sensitive areas where we are going to programme, we will need that kind of composition. (**Agency G**)

Another perspective is offered by a Country Director who notes that their agency is,

recruiting from those (local) communities so the staff members come from those communities so that they are part and parcel of what was affecting the community and work with them to develop solutions. (**Agency C**)

With respect to resource use, four of six organisations demonstrate a balanced approach to the use of financial resources during the recruitment process, evident from the use of multiple recruitment methods. Although I define resources as financial, the use of resources also reflects the capability of the existing HR staff to identify the most efficient use of financial resources in the hiring process. Table 2.1 illustrates that the majority of organisations use a mixture of both in-house and external recruitment methods, thus balancing less expensive and more expensive recruitment strategies.

Asked about the use of resources, interviewee response varies. At **Agency C**, its Headquarters is not involved in national hiring, and the in-country office has the freedom to determine its resource use for recruitment. A Front-Line Manager noted,

you cannot bring in new human resources when you don't have enough funds. So for you to be able to recruit more staff you need to have resources for that. (**Agency C**)

The manager goes onto highlight the regular use of contracts and temporary staff. This conveys to the author that the manager has greater expectations of the Agency's senior management to provide more resources than are available.

In contrast to what appears to be an insufficient allocation of resources at **Agency C**, an innovative application of resources by **Agency F** led to

the development of its own in-house evaluation tool. Staff use the tool to determine whether the required position should be a national or international hire. According to the HR Manager,

we have a job evaluation tool that determines whether the position is national or international based on the point rating after we run the position through the tool. (**Agency F**)

The initiative taken to develop the evaluative tool suggests that the agency identified a need for consistency in its hiring practices. Recognising that it lacked a mechanism to ensure consistency in its decision-making, the agency responded to the identified need by allocating sufficient resources to develop the tool.

It appears that agencies tend to practice more heterogeneous hiring in that they hire from a diverse group, and adopt a balanced approach to resource use, meaning that they use multiple recruitment methods. This finding places them towards the higher end of Boxall and Purcell's (2008) management capacity scale. The organisations can be considered to be either "flexible" or "autonomous" dependent upon their level of labour market power as illustrated in Fig. 2.1 earlier in this chapter. Both of these classifications reflect a high degree of management capacity.

Turning to the second element in the Boxall and Purcell (2008) model, labour market power is interpreted as the attractiveness of compensation offered by the agencies. In Kenya, the development sector generally offers more attractive compensation than that afforded by public service employment. However, when compared to employment opportunities in any of the United Nations' (UN) agencies located in Nairobi, an INGO employer cannot compete with the compensation packages from these institutions. For example, the annual total gross compensation for the position of Senior Programme Officer at 18 of 36 NGOs recorded in the 2010 LiNGO Survey ranged from the minimum hiring rate of 2,444,386 Kenya Shillings (25 %) to a maximum of 6,062,478 Kenya Shillings (75 %).¹ According to the UN's salary grid in 2011, the gross pensionable salary of a Senior Programme Officer position is 6,061,988 Kenya Shillings to 9,092,990 Kenya Shillings over a ten-step grid (United Nations 2011).

With respect to the ability to offer an attractive compensation package, two agencies illustrate the labour market power of INGOs in the Kenyan

labour market. An HR Manager commenting on its compensation package states that,

yes, (we have) a nice package. We are not yet there, we are always striving to improve our package so that we are attractive. (**Agency E**)

Agency G recognises the need to remain current with respect to the Kenyan labour market. Shortly before the interview, the agency completed a thorough internal review of its human resource practices following an extensive restructuring. While the agency provided only limited rationale for the restructuring, few implementation details and no review outcomes to the author, collectively the interviewees from the agency acknowledged that the results of the internal review produced a salary regrading that was well received by staff.

INGOs have lower salaries than comparable organisations in the Kenyan labour market. According to Boxall and Purcell's (2008) model, these findings would classify the agencies either as "flexible" or "muddling through", depending upon their level of management capacity. Both of these classifications denote a low degree of labour market power and reflect their position in the local labour market.

Drawing both on documentation and management interviews, a picture emerges of the recruitment strategies practiced by INGOs in Kenya. The findings suggest that INGO recruitment strategies are considered to have high levels of management capacity to recruit a diverse workforce and low levels of labour market power to attract and retain candidates. When positioned on Boxall and Purcell's (2008) matrix, the INGOs are classified as "flexible" organisations (Boxall and Purcell 2008). Classification as "flexible" organisations suggests that, in comparison to HR practices in SMEs, INGOs in Kenya demonstrate greater management capacity. These findings are consistent with the responses among the interviewees from all agencies who are intent on messaging to the author that their organisations are inclusive, sensitive to local demographic issues and manage resources efficiently.

Our understanding of the recruitment process contributes to our developing knowledge of HRM practice within INGOs in Kenya. As human resources are an organisational asset essential to the strengthening of INGO performance and competitive advantage, the recruitment and retention of these resources over the longer term is of primary importance to the organisation (McMullen and Schellenberg 2003).

2.5.1 *Job-Posting Procedures*

From an analysis of recruitment strategies using the evaluative model of Boxall and Purcell (2008), we shift to an exploration of job-posting procedures. These procedures or methods are determined by management capacity. Drawing on both interviews and documentation (primarily HR manuals and policy documents) from the INGOs, I examine job-posting procedures adopted by the various agencies to identify preferred search methods. Table 2.2 presents the job-posting procedures of each agency.

The information contained in Table 2.2 provides insights into external recruitment practice. With the exception of two agencies (**Agencies B** and **D**) that utilise few recruitment methods to search for candidates, four of the six agencies (**Agencies C, E, F** and **G**) use a variety of external recruitment methods. The methods can be classified into three groups: closed, responsive and open searches (Marchington and Wilkinson 2005).

Closed searches confine the recruitment practice to a limited group of external candidates that acts as a form of preselection for the recruiting agency. None of the participant agencies posts its vacancies at academic institutions, while three of the six agencies (**Agencies C, E** and **G**) utilise word of mouth/networks and one of the six agencies (**Agency E**) uses a recruitment agency. The most popular closed search method, word of mouth/networks, includes such Kenyan networks as the Interagency Working Group (IAWG) on Human Resources.

Responsive methods refer to speculative applications. These applications refer both to the submission of applications by those candidates that cold-call the employer to inquire about potential vacancies and to

Table 2.2 Job-posting procedure by agency

| <i>Type of search</i> | <i>Procedures</i> | <i>B</i> | <i>C</i> | <i>D</i> | <i>E</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>G</i> |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Closed | Word of mouth/networks | | * | | * | | * |
| | School, colleges, universities | | | | | | |
| | Recruitment agencies | | | | * | | |
| Responsive | Speculative applications | | | | | | |
| Open | Local newspapers | | * | | * | * | * |
| | Specialised press | | * | | * | | |
| | National newspapers | | * | * | | * | * |
| | Employers website | * | * | | * | * | |

Source: Author compilation based on research findings

those candidates whose names may be on file from previous recruitments. Agencies note that they retain recruitment documentation for future reference in individual recruitments should the preferred candidate not pass probation but agencies do not suggest that individual files are retained over the long term.

Open searches are the most frequently used recruitment methods by the participant agencies. Newspapers, both national and local, and employers' websites are the most widely used medium for job posting, and used by all agencies in some configuration. Specialised press such as the international staffing website, ReliefWeb.net, is used by two of the six agencies (**Agencies C and E**).

INGOs prefer open search methods that provide an opportunity to reach a broader audience with their vacancy postings. Within this categorisation, newspaper and employer websites prove to be the preferred means of external posting, providing a mix of low- and high-cost mediums. Of the closed search methods, word of mouth/networks is the favoured method used by three of the six agencies and involves staff in the distribution of vacancy postings to colleagues and networks.

Management interviews on the topic of job-posting procedures yield insights, particularly in terms of interpersonal linkages. There are distinct messages about organisational achievements and the effectiveness of job-posting procedures as evidenced in examples from **Agencies C and F**.

It is important for organisations to signal their satisfaction with their HR practices. **Agency C** seeks to confirm that their organisation recruits from a wide talent pool. The Country Director states,

we then went out for competitive recruitment and looked for people who could give use the sort of thing we were looking for ... (the presence of global forums in Nairobi) is a very good instrument for us to create momentum ... we recruited someone who had the skills for the programme who came in and was also very good with partnership building, alliance building.
(**Agency C**)

From the use of the word “competitive”, I understand that the agency believes that its recruitment process is appropriate to achieve its goals, and more importantly, it accesses a diverse group of candidates suggesting that it ranks high in management capacity.

As a preferred method for distribution of job postings, the HR Manager at **Agency F** comments on the use of word of mouth and employee networks as recruitment methods,

the way we recruit [is] without bias, based on fairness, based on merit, we do not hire relatives that is reflected even in the way we act. Values are there in many organisations but how often are they followed? People are able to see your commitment to those values in the way you operate and the activities you engage in. I can confidently say for us, that our values are there, our staff are committed. (**Agency F**)

Whether using open search methods that provide wider scope for recruitment or more closed search methods that target a narrow pool of candidates, INGOs in Kenya demonstrate their ability to combine methods to maximise their results. Preference for open methods reflects a desire to broaden the recruitment scope and to draw from a heterogeneous candidate pool.

Table 2.3 compares job-posting procedures among the sampled INGOs to UK organisations. CIPD's annual recruitment and retention survey (CIPD 2009) is a useful comparator as a reflection of industry practice.

My expectation was that organisations would use multiple job-posting procedures to reach as wide an audience as possible. I find that both INGOs and UK-based organisations use local press and employee referrals to advertise job postings at similar rates. However, the figures suggest that INGOs are underutilising specialised sites as only 33 % of INGOs

Table 2.3 Comparison of job-posting procedures

| <i>HRM policies</i> | <i>HRM practices of sample INGOs (%)</i> | <i>HRM practices in UK (%)</i> |
|--------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| | <i>Job posting</i> | |
| (a) Use of local press (open search) | 67 | 70 |
| (b) Specialised sites (open search) | 33 | 55 |
| (c) Referrals (closed search) | 50 | 46 |

Source: Author compilation based on research findings

demonstrate use of this procedure for job postings compared to 55 % of organisations in the UK. At the time of my research, social media as a recruitment tool was not widely used by the INGOs in Kenya.

2.6 CONCLUSION

Recruitment strategies, measured by management capacity and labour market power, facilitate a cross-case analysis among INGOs in Kenya. The analysis is based on INGO engagement in the recruitment process and effective utilisation of resources as well as power to recruit in the labour market (Boxall and Purcell 2008). The use of Boxall and Purcell's (2008) evaluative model to examine recruitment strategies of INGOs contributes to an understanding of management's interest in the strategic prioritisation of recruitment in the organisation. As Pfeffer (1984) reminds us, the more rigorous the recruitment process, the higher the expectation for performance. For INGOs intent on hiring top talent to meet their performance objectives, an effective recruitment process is an essential part of the equation. Participant agencies demonstrate a balanced use of resources and recruit from a heterogeneous pool of candidates. Overall, the findings suggest high levels of management capacity to recruit a diverse workforce.

With respect to labour market power, the agencies studied could not compete with the compensation packages offered by such agencies as the UN in Nairobi. As an operational entity in the development sector, the UN agencies appeal to staff seeking stable, guaranteed long-term employment. There is no recognition that lower wages could act as a screening device for agencies to attract staff committed to the values of the organisation rather than its salary grid. Thus, participant agencies find themselves limited in their ability to attract skilled candidates in the Kenyan labour market. This limitation positions the agencies at the low end of Boxall and Purcell's (2008) rating scale of labour market power. INGOs in the study have lower levels of labour market power to attract and retain candidates when measured against other players such as the UN in the development sector in Kenya. The examination of recruitment strategies records both higher levels of management capacity and lower levels of labour market power. The combination of these findings results in a classification of INGOs as "flexible" structures. Low levels of management capacity would have meant that organisations are conservative, recruiting from a homogeneous group and do not utilise resources to full advantage.

INGOs are aware of their agency's positioning with respect to the labour market and consider their packages to be comparable to other INGOs. This finding suggests that interviewees are intent on messaging to the author that their organisations are inclusive, sensitive to local demographic issues and manage resources efficiently. However, ever-changing labour market conditions require that agencies continually monitor their position to ensure that they remain competitive.

Management's recruitment capacity indicates an effort at prioritisation of the HR function. Although INGOs are unable to compete on compensation with UN agencies, the next chapter analyses INGO selection practices with particular emphasis on selection methods and employment security that are measures of attraction for potential recruits.

NOTE

1. The Local Salary Survey for the NGO Community was completed by a collaborative group comprised of Birches Group, Inside NGO, ORC Worldwide and People in Aid. A hardcopy of the July 2010 survey results was provided to the author by one of the participant agencies in the study. The survey participants included 39 local and international non-governmental organisations in Kenya.

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Selection

3.1 INTRODUCTION

A review of selection policies and practices focuses on the application process and selection methods. There are several stages to selection from the initial drafting of the job advertisement and posting, to short-listing of applications, hosting of interviews and post-interview decision-making (McCourt and Eldridge 2003). Each of these stages can entail a significant amount of work but the successful completion of each stage contributes cumulatively to positive outcomes for the organisation in terms of identification of the best candidate.

In examining the lengthy process of selection, the literature supports the development of structured, measureable selection criteria in order to improve the validity and reliability of the candidate selection process (Cooper et al. 2003; McCourt and Eldridge 2003; Boxall and Purcell 2008; Marchington and Wilkinson 2005) through its multiple stages. The choice of selection method can greatly improve the quality of information gathered during the selection process, thereby positively impacting candidate selection.

3.2 THEORY: APPLICATIONS, METHODS, PANELS AND INTERNAL PROMOTION

The importance of selection as a distinct element of the hiring process is often not appreciated for its impact. Yet the method of job posting and choice of interview technique exert strong influence on hiring outcomes. The literature suggests that techniques such as competency-based interviews, structured interviews (panels or critical incident), telephone interviews, general ability tests, tests for specific skills, personality questionnaires and assessment centres (Marchington and Wilkinson 2005; Cooper et al. 2003) should be incorporated into the selection process to ensure valid and reliable results (McCourt and Eldridge 2003; Boxall and Purcell 2008; Cooper et al. 2003; Marchington and Wilkinson 2005).

The choice of selection method(s) is often dependent on available resources, thus highlighting Boxall and Purcell's (2008) emphasis on resource allocation as an important determinant in the hiring process. Pre-planning of the hiring process that encompasses both recruitment and selection enables firms to effectively allocate resources. As the initial stage in the selection process, the application process includes drafting of both the job description and the job advertisement for circulation. Boxall and Purcell (2008) state that the practice of defining an ideal candidate prior to drafting the job advertisement can improve candidate attraction rates. Candidates rely on the application process to present a realistic organisational image through the inclusion of a job description and use of a standardised application form (Cooper et al. 2003).

Among selection techniques, structured interviews are often the preferred method of hiring. While objectivity and standardisation are significant benefits of the structured interview, their use requires significant preparation time and expense. Preparation for structured interviews includes drafting of key questions that focus on candidate knowledge and attributes required for the position. The use of standardised questions ensures that all candidates are posed the same questions and that consistency is maintained throughout. Standardised scoring encourages objectivity in a process that focuses on information collection rather than actual decision-making. Assessment centres composed of pre-determined tasks that reflect the job (CIPD 2015) are considered a stronger selection method for their ability to collect multiple evidence of candidate skill (McCourt and Eldridge 2003).

McCourt and Eldridge (2003) emphasise the importance of selection criteria and selection panels as useful practices for encouraging transparency, thereby minimising risks of nepotism, discrimination and favouritism in the hiring process. The role of selection panellists is important in the preparation and conduct of the interview (Cooper et al. 2003). Selection panellists represent key members of the organisation and often include the immediate supervisor of the new position, a representative from the HR department and occasionally a representative of senior management. Training of panel members and distribution of a user manual add rigour to the process. For both experienced and inexperienced staff, the manual provides useful information outlining the stages of the selection process and defines panellist roles and responsibilities. Its importance lies in ensuring consistent application among panellists. Selection methods and criteria are tailored specifically to the organisation (Cooper et al. 2003). Good practice suggests that consistency and transparency are important to ensuring an effective and efficient process.

The consistent application of selection criteria for candidate ranking is important. The appointment of the highest scoring candidate improves the predictive value of the interview (McCourt and Eldridge 2003). Collectively, the use of these practices ensures a measure of consistency across the selection process regardless of the position and contributes a measure of objectivity. Boxall and Purcell (2008) conclude that it is essential for firms who are seeking to develop a “high performance work system”, to use structured interviews and candidate profiling to recruit candidates as the practice translates into increased productivity and improved organisational performance.

However, the adoption of standardised methods of selection can be undermined in its implementation. Attempts at objective interviewing can be impacted by the interviewers themselves and highlight the weaknesses of the interview approach, particularly when it is the sole source of information gathering. For example, interviewers that seek to confirm their favourable first impressions ask less evaluative questions thus reducing the possibility of an objective evaluation (CIPD 2015; Carson Marr and Cable 2014). Research suggests there are inconsistencies in interviewer hiring decisions based on familiarity (Lee et al. 2015).

Another element that underscores the vulnerability of objective hiring is interviewer intention. An interviewer who focuses on selling the organisation to the prospective candidate rather than evaluating candidate suitability alters the outcome of the interview process. As Carson Marr

and Cable (2014) note, when interviewers adopt a selling orientation, they are less likely to “accurately assess applicants’ dispositions and predict citizenship behaviours, value congruence and success” (Carson Marr and Cable 2014: 645).

Countering the argument in favour of the consistency of standardised interviews, Cable and Judge (1997) suggest that outcomes of the use of person-organisation fit assessments may improve organisational performance. However, a challenge to the use of person-organisation fit assessment is that similarities attract, thus increasing the likelihood that interviewers will select candidates that more closely resemble themselves (Byrne 1969 as cited by Cable and Judge 1997; CIPD 2015). The hiring of similarities increases the potential for greater homogeneity in the workplace and as noted in the Boxall and Purcell (2008) model suggests lower levels of management capacity.

Internal promotion is considered an important selection method (CIPD 2009). Also referred to as employment security, internal promotion is identified as one of 11 elements of the HR and performance model (Purcell et al. 2003). As a selection method, its importance is confirmed by Delaney and Huselid (1996) who note that firms that fill vacancies from within and provide opportunities for internal promotion signal to employees the potential for advancement and employer interest in staff retention. It is a signal to employees, of employer trust and desire to retain them over the longer-term (Pfeffer 1984; Porter 1985).

The variability of selection techniques and their application suggests that organisations must adopt intentional practices. In commenting on selection techniques, Marchington and Wilkinson (2005) note,

it is worth stating at the outset that no single technique, regardless of how well it is designed and administered, is capable of producing perfect selection decisions that predict with certainty which individuals will perform well in a particular role. (Marchington and Wilkinson 2005: 175)

Overall, the combined process of recruitment and selection can provide an important signpost to employees of employer commitment. Recruitment strategies measured by management capacity and labour market power (Boxall and Purcell 2008) enable comparison between those organisations who actively engage in the hiring process and utilise their resources to maximum advantage, and those organisations who retain the “status quo”. The literature proposes the use of structured, measureable selection criteria such as assessment centres to improve the validity and reliability

of the selection process, given its important position as the initial interaction between the new recruit as a potential employee and the recruiting organisation, or, in the case of internal promotion with current employees.

3.3 FOR-PROFIT SECTOR: SELECTION PROCESSES

An exploration of selection processes in the UK and the USA provide insight into industry practice. The standard interview remains the most popular recruitment method in the for-profit sector. Eighty-nine percent of private sector respondents in the UK acknowledge their use of the standard interview among candidates (CIPD 2015a: 24).

A cross-sectoral study of UK manufacturing and production, private, public and voluntary sector services, provides insight into candidate selection practices. Among selection methods, competency-based interviews are used by 69 %, structured interviews (panels) by 59 % and tests for specific skills by 50 %. Seventy-nine percent of firms advertise their positions internally (CIPD 2009).

There are signs that employers are paying greater attention to the selection process. Topical papers on the selection process contrast the downside of poor selection process with good practice. While poor process can lead to candidate withdrawal, complaints and even legal challenges, organisations can strengthen their selection process through consistency, interviewer training and information sharing. (SIOP 2012).

Future methods aimed at strengthening the selection process include an assessment of personal accomplishments that require a written submission from candidates, use of situational judgement tests, as well as work sample tests that demonstrate aptitude in completing job tasks (Pulakos 2005). Arguing in support of selection rigour, Pulakos (2005) states that the use of “assessments to make selection decisions ... have been shown to result in significant productivity increases, cost savings, decrease in attrition” (Pulakos 2005: 1).

3.4 NON-PROFIT SECTOR: SELECTION PROCESSES

While the multiplicity of selection methods is evident from the literature on selection process in the for-profit sector, details of selection processes among NPOs are notably absent. Much of the literature on non-profit management focuses on issues of leadership, governance and volunteer staffing. In one of the few articles on HR management in the NPO sector, competition for trained staff, retention and turnover rates were identified

as issues facing human-service NPOs in Ohio, USA in the mid-1990s. The article acknowledges the inherent challenges to adoption of for-profit management practices by the non-profit sector to address HR issues. Challenges include staff alienation due to the introduction of for-profit management practice (Alexander 2000).

Limited financial resources place additional pressure on NPOs during the hiring process as limited resources curtail available recruitment and selection options. The pressure is exacerbated as for-profit organisations enter the non-profit sector to provide similar services. By offering services normally provided by NPOs, the well-resourced for-profit organisations are in direct competition for the most qualified candidates (Frumkin and Andre-Clark 2000).

The use of social media as an initial screening tool has proven useful in the hiring process as it often yields more information than provided in the application process. A survey of HR professionals found that just over one quarter of NPOs in the USA use social media as a screening tool, a rate of usage that doubles for for-profit organisations. (SHRM 2016).

The new generation of non-profit managers seeks a purpose-led organisation based on shared values and beliefs and a desire for meaningful work with materialistic rewards. This suggests that NPOs must address retention issues by providing promotion or risk Millennial managers shifting to other sectors (McGinnis Johnson and Ng 2015). Internal promotion within NPOs affords Millennials opportunities for recognition and advancement within organisations that reflect their personal values.

3.5 INGO EXPERIENCE IN KENYA

With an understanding of the recruitment strategies adopted by INGOs in Kenya (see Chap. 2), the study turns to an examination of selection practice. There are several stages to selection practice from the initial drafting of the job advertisement, to short-listing of applications, hosting of interviews, reference checking and choice of candidate (McCourt and Eldridge 2003). Scholars identify a wide range of criteria for assessing the selection practices adopted by firms. In applying these criteria to participant agencies, I focus on four elements: the application process, selection methods, the role of selection panels and internal promotion, based on available data from all agencies.

3.5.1 *Application Process and Selection Methods*

The selection process as an element of organisational hiring is a standardised process for INGOs. The application process is examined using three factors: (1) the presence of a user manual for the selection panel that outlines agency hiring practice, (2) an exploration of the job posting content: the presence of a detailed job description itemising required and preferred qualifications and skills, and a detailed description of the agency, its scope of work and organisational mission, and (3) the use of a standardised application form to ensure a level playing field in queries about applicant skills and abilities.

Selection methods chosen for examination are structured interviews (panel), tests for specific skills, use of objective scoring and assessment centres. The choice of factors for examination reflects commonalities across all agencies, facilitates the gathering of consistent data from all agencies and enables the author to create an image of HR management process among INGOs in Kenya.

Drawing on the data from agency documentation and information gathered from interviewees, I construct a picture in Table 3.1 of both the application process and selection methods used by each of the INGOs that allows cross-case analysis and individual case comparison.

The data in Table 3.1 indicate areas of commonality and a range of procedures used by agencies. In the application process, there is commonality across the agencies. In the job advertisement, all of the INGOs include an organisational image as well as job preview for the potential applicant. A standardised application form is used by five of six agencies. With the exception of **Agencies B** and **C**, the majority of agencies require online

Table 3.1 Agency selection procedures

| <i>Selection procedures</i> | <i>B</i> | <i>C</i> | <i>D</i> | <i>E</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>G</i> |
|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| <i>Application process</i> | | | | | | |
| User manual for hiring process | | | | | | |
| Job advertisement (includes job preview and organisational image) | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| Standardised application form | | * | * | * | * | * |
| <i>Selection methods</i> | | | | | | |
| Assessment centre | * | | | | | |
| Structured interviews | | * | * | * | * | * |
| Tests for specific skills | | * | * | * | * | * |

Source: Author compilation based on research findings

submission of applications through their website, a process that requires applicants to log-in and submit their documents to a central register. The exception agencies designate that the applications be forwarded to an identified individual, and, in the case of **Agency C**, it is a standardised application form. In contrast, to this consistency, none of the agencies have a user manual for HR professionals and panel members to ensure consistency during the selection process.

From a broad range of selection methods, the participant agencies limit their choices to assessment centres, structured interviews (using panel format) and tests for specific skills. Research findings demonstrate that five of six agencies use the structured interview with standardised questions, identified by Boxall and Purcell (2008) as good practice. With the exception of **Agency B**, tests for specific skills are used by five of six agencies dependent upon the requirement of the position. An assessment centre is used by **Agency B** to evaluate candidate skills and abilities.

3.5.2 *Role of Selection Panel*

From the review of selection methods, I learn that interview panel members are key determinants of who joins the organisation. Selection panels are comprised of representatives from the HR department, staff members and occasionally senior management dependent on the level of the posted position. None of the panellists receive training in advance of the interview process, nor do the organisations provide a user manual to assist in the preparation of the interview tool and to ensure consistency throughout the selection process.

To further understand how agencies conduct the selection process, I explore the role of selection panellists, based on their participation: (1) in short-listing interview candidates, (2) the use of objective scoring methods during the interview and (3) discussion of organisational “fit”. The findings are presented in Table 3.2 below.

At all agencies, the HR Manager is responsible for preparing the long-list of candidates from all of the applications received. Using the job specification as a guide, the applications are compared to the requirements of the job advertisement. Those that meet the criteria, however broadly, are included in the long-list, which can total up to 25 applicants. The applications and the long-list are then shared with the hiring department for short-listing which is completed by the line manager or supervisor who has the “technical knowledge” to identify suitable candidates. In only

Table 3.2 Role of selection panel

| <i>Pannellist role</i> | <i>B</i> | <i>C</i> | <i>D</i> | <i>E</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>G</i> |
|---------------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Short-listing of potential candidates | | * | | | | |
| Objective scoring methods | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| Discussion of organisational fit | * | * | * | | * | |

Source: Author compilation based on research findings

one instance, at **Agency C**, is the selection panellists or hiring committee responsible for short-listing.

During the interview itself, individual panellists score the candidates using prepared score sheets and the HR Manager generally assumes responsibility for compiling the scores and tabulating the total score of each candidate to facilitate candidate ranking. At **Agencies C, E and F**, the scores are tabulated at the end of each interview, whereas at **Agencies B, D and G**, the compilation occurs at the end of the day or the end of the interview process in which multiple candidates have been interviewed. While the individual panellist completes the initial scoring, responsibility for candidate ranking is a joint undertaking among panel members at all agencies for sign-off and approval.

Panellists at four agencies (**Agencies B, C, D and F**) are involved in discussion of organisational “fit”, in other words, a conversation of whether the preferred candidate(s) exhibited characteristics or traits that would preclude them from integrating into the organisational culture. In this instance, the panellists’ conversation on organisational “fit” lends itself to discourse analysis, and closer examination of the interview data reveals a discourse that counters the use of objective scoring of candidates (see Annex A3 for further details of research methods). Scoring and ranking of candidates is a lengthy process and one that not always results in the highest ranked individual being offered the position according to interviewees. Panels practice individual scoring during the course of the interview that is then shared among panellists and totalled to identify the ranking of interviewees. The four agencies (**Agencies B, C, D and F**) acknowledge that it is not necessarily the person with the highest score that is offered the position, while the other two agencies (**Agencies E and G**) are ambivalent. Rather four of six agencies rely on a determination of organisational fit to supplement interview scoring. Rationale for the use of organisational fit, as a determining factor in candidate ranking is evident from the discourse of HR managers at each of these agencies (**Agencies B, C, D and F**).

At the end of the assessment centre, there is a discussion around the scoring so that you can ask yourself: this one scored highest; this one is closely behind this, how do we feel about it? So it is purely the decision of the panel ... you can pick some very bright things on a candidate which might not be reflected on the scoring, because scoring might be a bit subjective. (**Agency B**)

Now yes because there are times where it doesn't mean that because the person got the highest from all the members of the panel but then when we look, when we sit down to discuss the individual's strengths you find out that even though maybe at the end of the day even though this person got the most points but maybe there are other things like the way the person conducts himself and can this person really fit? (**Agency C**)

we also look at salary expectations ... gender balance or marginalised communities. ... Sometimes someone performs very well but there are certain things; about the way he displays himself; the attitude that makes you feel, no this person may not fit in. (**Agency D**)

So its not just our decision to appoint based on scoring, but also as a panelist what do we feel about this candidate, their communication, their experience, do they know how to do the job, do they fit in? For us the most important thing is fitting in. In addition to technical questions, we ask a lot of situational questions, how they would deal with conflict, difficult colleague and many other things. (**Agency F**)

Agencies introduce a degree of subjectivity into the hiring process that is not documented and not easily measurable. Subjectivity could be considered to undermine attempts to create a transparent, consistent selection process. Recognition of the discrepancy between the stated desire for transparency and practice in the selection process leads to a further question as to whether agencies regularly review their hiring processes. Do agencies examine selection procedures to confirm that the processes themselves are accurate in the identification of the most suitable candidates, who bring new knowledge, skills and abilities to the organisation?

In response to this line of questioning by the author, four of the agencies (**Agencies C, E, F and G**) direct their responses to a description of the probation period as the determinant of whether there will be a process review. In other words, if the new hire does not meet the requirements as

set out in the probation period, then the agency will institute an organisational review of the hiring process to determine whether there are any inconsistencies that could have contributed to the decision to hire. Two agencies (**Agencies B and D**) respond to the question in such a manner as to suggest they conducted an evaluation of the hiring process itself rather than rely on the results of a probationary review. **Agency B** relies on anecdotal feedback from external and internal stakeholders to evaluate its hiring process, while **Agency D** assumes an ad-hoc approach to reviewing their hiring processes.

Agency B's HR Manager notes,

So far where our advisors go we get very good feedback. Sometimes they go and present something and even the Government will say: we want to work with (**Agency B**). We have so many of such stories and we are happy. So I think there is a very close relationship between that assessment center and induction and performance. (**Agency B**)

The HR Manager at **Agency D** addresses the issue,

I do not do it for every position but we have done it for one or two positions where something came up, during the probation period. Because during the probation period the line manager sets objectives; they agree objectives with the candidates. These objectives are supposed to be achieved within 3 months but the line manager is also supposed to play a role in providing leadership, guidance, monitoring, and having feedback sessions.

Towards the end of the probation period, what I do is send out a form. The line manager is supposed to take the form, sit with the employees, discuss the achievement of the objectives during that period and if there were any issues why this person was unable to achieve those objectives then they note that down and at the end of the form the manager makes his or her recommendations as to whether we should confirm this person in that appointment. Some of the feedback comes from that but I do not consciously do it for every role. (**Agency D**)

The responses from all agencies suggest a lack of internal reflection and ongoing evaluation of their selection practices, beyond the assessment of a new recruit during the probation period. This in itself is a limiting process bounded by the constraints of the position description.

Internal Promotion

While selection practices examined to this point are used by the INGOs to select external candidates, I am also interested in learning how internal promotions are handled, and whether internal candidates are given preference over external hires when a position becomes available or is newly created. Delaney and Huselid (1996) identify internal promotion as a sign of employment security.

Four of six agencies (**Agencies C, D, E and G**) specifically highlight internal promotional opportunities. **Agency C** notes that on occasion the agency offers the position to an internal candidate without competition if they think there is available capacity within the organisation, or the agency encourages internal candidates to submit to an external posting in order that a combination of internal and external candidates vie for positions.

According to the HR Manager,

some of these positions we don't just want to restrict it to internal because we want to be as transparent as possible and accountable so what we do is if we know people are fit internally we encourage them to apply so that there is a process and it is documented and you compete with the external.
(**Agency C**)

Agencies D, E and G note that internal candidates have precedence over external hires in order to signal agency prioritisation of internal staff. This is consistent with the positive signalling effect noted in the literature (Delaney and Huselid 1996; Pfeffer 1984; Porter 1985). **Agency G** actively attempts to increase the number of national staff who hold senior management positions in their organisation. For example, staff in project coordinator positions are groomed for internal promotion in order to reduce the number of expatriates on staff particularly in management positions. The Assistant Country Director notes,

we have headquarters, who are also promoting national staff and they have a national staff capacity building programme which means that they want to reduce the expat presence in missions, gradually, and bring more national staff into senior management positions. The process is quite extensive; there is a whole recruitment process of selecting the Project Coordinators.
(**Agency G**)

To contextualise the available data on selection methods and internal promotion among INGOs in Kenya, the findings are compared to

industry data. Table 3.3 compares selection practices among the sampled INGOs to organisations responding to Chartered Institute of Personnel Development's (CIPD) annual recruitment and retention survey in the UK (CIPD 2009). The data in the CIPD survey is a useful comparator as a reflection of industry practice.

In Table 3.3, it is evident that structured interviews and tests of specific skills are used at a significantly higher rate among the INGOs than among UK-based organisations (CIPD 2009). Of note, is the use of an assessment centre as a selection method by **Agency B**. There is no comparable rating for this selection method in the UK-based study. The assessment centre is used for evaluation of candidate potential for future learning and development. According to **Agency B**'s recruitment documents, candidates are queried as to their motivation for the job and the "value-added" they could bring to the organisation; their understanding of and contribution to shaping the development agenda; their use of knowledge and sharing of lessons learned; and identification of the value of performance management to the organisation. These queries shift the level of inquiry within the interview process beyond the standard interview questions that explore candidate experience and achievements, and provide the candidate with an opportunity to contextualise their work, thereby demonstrating potential for future learning and development as well as their ability to bring new ideas on board to the agency's benefit. As evident in Table 3.3, internal promotion is used to a lesser extent by INGOs than among UK-based organisations. Research interest included internal promotions as part of the selection process, how they are handled and whether internal candidates are given preference over external hires when a position becomes available or is newly created. Although INGOs are unable to compete on compensation, the provision of employment security through internal promotion suggests a benefit that could be attractive to both current staff and potential recruits.

Table 3.3 Rates of usage of selection practices

| <i>HRM policies</i> | <i>HRM practices of sample INGOs (%)</i> | <i>HRM practices in UK (%)</i> |
|------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| | <i>Selection methods</i> | |
| (a) Structured interviews | 83 | 59 |
| (b) Tests of specific skills | 83 | 50 |
| (c) Assessment centre | 16 | |
| Internal promotion | 66 | 79 |

Source: Author compilation based on research findings

3.6 CONCLUSION

Building on the research findings described in the previous chapter that open search methods are the most widely used and supported methods by the agencies, this chapter explored INGO selection process. Selection procedures are compared to industry standards in four areas: application processes, selection methods, the role of selection panellists and internal promotions. The application process is examined using three factors that find INGOs incorporate both an organisational image and job preview in the job posting, and require applicants to complete a standardised application. Omitted from agency practice is a user manual for HR professionals and panellists to ensure consistency in the selection process. Structured interviews and tests of specific skills are used across five of six agencies, with one organisation using an assessment centre.

Candidates at all agencies with the exception of **Agency B** are scored against prepared job specifications and their ability to meet stated qualifications. All agencies utilise objective scoring by selection panels using a common rating system. However, four of six agencies acknowledge that it is not necessarily the person that scores highest in the interview that is offered the position; rather they rely on a determination of organisational “fit” by the panellists to supplement objective scoring. Finally, the findings demonstrate a common practice of internal promotion by four of six agencies, thereby offering a degree of employment security to both current and future employees.

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Participation

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the chapter is to generate an understanding of stakeholder experience of participation in organisational decision-making in the non-profit sector, specifically non-governmental organisations. There are three main stakeholders that form the nexus of programme development and implementation for INGOs: management, staff and beneficiaries. As defined in Chap. 1, these stakeholders are responsible for ensuring that programming meets the organisation's stated goals and objectives. Challenges of input, communication and contribution shape these relations and impact on programming results. In an ideal world, the essential contributions of management, staff and beneficiaries would contribute equally to the identification of new programme solutions. Rather, we know little of the relationship between these stakeholders.

In organisations such as those in the study, employee participation can range along a continuum from bounded stakeholder participation in organisational activities, to an empowerment model that seeks to develop an enabling environment, to partnership relations that denote a shift in stakeholder relations to an ownership model. These models of participation in organisational decision-making reflect power relations between organisations and their stakeholders. A comparison of organisational decision-making across agencies in Kenya uncovers shifting power dynamics.

The importance of employee participation is found in its contribution to productivity and organisational performance. Employee participation in organisational decision-making is an important driver of employee motivation and organisational performance, and recognised in mainstream management literature as a significant feature of organisational functioning (Belanger 2000; Purcell et al. 2003; Pfeffer 1998). Participation, empowerment and partnership are institutionalised models that shape the employee role in the workplace. In the development sector, these same participatory models facilitate involvement by other stakeholders including beneficiaries.

Quality circles, total quality management and team working were concepts introduced by employers to encourage employees to work collectively. They are emblematic of direct participation (Wilkinson et al. 2010). Newsletters, surveys and briefings are examples of employer mechanisms to foster information sharing.

While applicable to employees, participation in the development sector can be seen as an opportunity, albeit limited, for the recipients of programming, in this case beneficiaries, to also have a say in programming. We know that beneficiary participation is tightly controlled by the INGOs themselves and beneficiaries are only “invited” to contribute at the end of the project life cycle rather than at its initial stage of design and development (Cornwall 2004: 78; Hatley 1999: 16).

Empowerment is a term that shifts stakeholder involvement further in favour of the employee. Empowerment accepts the increased inclusiveness by employers. In the for-profit sector, the shift can be a representational one. As members of trade unions and staff associations, employees assume a greater collective role in organisational decision-making through the presence of these representational bodies. In the development sector, empowerment affords beneficiaries greater say in the management of aid monies and the project development cycle, from design to implementation and evaluation.

Partnership is “the shared input into decision-making (is) the greatest single challenge for management, at all levels, in all organisations, in all sectors” (Kirkham 2006: 4). In the development sector, partnership means shared responsibility and commitment between stakeholders. It is a commitment between INGOs and their beneficiaries that suggests a sharing of responsibility and resources through a relinquishing of power by INGO management over how financial and other resources are distributed.

These three participatory models are focused on the beneficiaries as aid recipients, similar to the clients or shareholders of a for-profit organisation. Beneficiary participation is a core element of INGO programming.

INGO staff as a key organisational resource are omitted from the inclusive, collective decision-making processes described in INGO policies and principles. Although the language of participation contained in INGO policies and principles can raise the expectations of both staff and beneficiaries as stakeholders of their role in organisational decision-making, the presumption appears to be that beneficiaries have a contributory role while staff do not. Whether beneficiaries and staff have played a contributory role in organisational decision-making is dependent in part on the existing power structures.

Although Western management practices such as participation and partnership have been widely adopted by INGOs (Billis and MacKeith 1993; Dichter 1999; Uphoff 1996; Smillie 1995; Padaki 2001), and are reflected in policies and principles, there is limited empirical evidence from which to understand the practice of participation by INGO staff. Evidence suggests there is “a consistent demand for high levels of participation in decision-making” (Hodson 1992: 130) by INGO staff.

Agencies utilise a variety of mechanisms to facilitate stakeholder participation in organisational decision-making. The participatory mechanisms provide an important vehicle for stakeholder input as well as stakeholder communication. As such, these mechanisms act as important regulators of stakeholder relations. The act of participation itself uncovers power differentials in stakeholder relations between management, staff and beneficiaries.

This chapter describes INGO policies and principles of participation, and explores the practice of staff and beneficiary involvement in organisational decision-making. We understand the practice of involvement, whether through participation, empowerment or partnership, by examining the available participatory mechanisms and the frequency with which they are utilised. This is not a formal assessment of organisational representation nor an examination of representational rights but rather an exploration of the “institutionalised systems based on normative understandings” (Frege and Godard 2010: 527) that shape INGO participation.

4.2 THEORY: PARTICIPATION, EMPOWERMENT AND PARTNERSHIP

In an exploration of people management, Pfeffer (1984) acknowledges that increased employment satisfaction and productivity can result from the process of decentralised decision-making associated with employee participation and empowerment. The participatory approaches to stakeholder involvement reflect a continuum from bounded stakeholder participation

to empowerment within an enabling environment to partnership. Each of these approaches is grounded in its own organisational theory.

4.2.1 *Participation*

Within a workplace setting, employee participation recognises employee influence on the production process, an influence that is both defined by management and desired by employees (Adams 1990). In an economy increasingly characterised by the generation and use of knowledge, the results of worker output is increasingly intangible (Drucker 1999) or imperceptible by employers and therefore, increasingly difficult to measure.

In exploring employee participation, there are two types of participation. Indirect participation involves employee representation in the process of organisational decision-making, while direct participation captures employee input from the employees themselves. The direct approach to participation (Wilkinson et al. 2010) is management-driven and is either consultative whereby employees' opinions are sought but decisions remain with management, or delegative in which some management decisions are assigned to employees. Communication methods such as staff meetings, team briefings, formal presentations, newsletters and surveys are examples of direct participation used by employers to gather employees input.

Guest and Peccei (2001) identify the expected benefits from greater employee participation in decision-making, including greater employee commitment and contribution, reduced absence and turnover rates and better overall organisational performance. The link between participation in organisational decision-making and employee motivation (Seibert et al. 2004; Strauss 2006) and job satisfaction (Heller et al. 1998) provides a supportive rationale for the introduction of participatory approaches.

However, employee participation in decision-making is inconsequential if there is no supportive structure behind it (Dichter 1989; Levine 1995; Strauss 2006; Seibert et al. 2004) or policies that encourage "high commitment" such as job security and performance pay (Levine 1995). Lack of employee understanding of the organisational context (Pasmore and Fagans 1992; Porter et al. 1975) for implementation of such policies alongside inequalities among employee education and skill levels (Heller et al. 1998) can form real barriers to the successful implementation of employee participation policies. Rather than address the barriers, management can recognise unqualified individuals as constraints to management decision-making (Marchington and Loveridge 1979).

4.2.2 *Empowerment*

Empowerment is defined as “increased motivation of individuals at work through delegation of authority to the lowest level in an organisation where competent decisions can be made” (Seibert et al. 2004: 332), in other words, a devolution of decision-making power.

Empowerment is viewed favourably in the development sector where it is defined as “a progression that helps people gain control over their own lives and increases the capacity of people to act on issues that they themselves define as important”, emphasising collective action by beneficiaries in directing their own development (Luttrell et al. 2009: 21; Friedmann 1992). The promotion of sustainable development through empowerment provides an important counter-balance to organisational bureaucratisation and the control of decision-making (Brinkerhoff and Coston 1999). The World Bank’s Development Report 2000–2001 specifically identifies empowerment of “the poor” as a means to reduce poverty through access to markets and responsive public services that contribute to economic growth. In programming terms, the empowerment agenda includes community control of services through “strengthening of local capacity and devolution of financial resources” (World Bank 2000–2001: 9).

Within the development sector, these definitions illustrate two interpretations of the power dynamic, firstly, “power to” whereby communities gain not only increased capacity to take action, but shift the existing structures within which decision-making occurs, and, secondly, “power over” through which communities exert their influence within existing structures, which in this instance refer to economic markets (Rowlands 1997 as cited by Luttrell et al. 2009).

4.2.3 *Partnership*

Fowler’s (2000) defines partnership as “a joint commitment to long-term interaction, shared responsibility for achievement, reciprocal obligation, equality, mutuality and balance of power” (Fowler 2000: 3). It is a definition that presumes existing stakeholder relations that bind together donors, governments, INGOs, local partner organisations, beneficiaries and communities in a synergistic relationship. For purposes of this research, the examined partnership relationship is between INGOs and their partner organisations, defined as national and local NGOs in Chap. 1. The term partnership suggests a reordering of the relationship between INGOs and

beneficiaries, that encourages increased recognition of beneficiary input and institution building of local NGOs (Lister 2000: 235). Its definition as presented by Fowler (2000) is also its recipe for success. The need for a partnership approach between stakeholders in development is underscored by the recognition that there is greater opportunity to achieve organisational goals and objectives when programme development is a locally driven process (Hatley 1999: 30), in other words, sustainable development is equated to local priorities.

Scholarly research on partnership identifies evaluative criteria that lend itself to a constructive assessment of partnership relations between INGOs and partner organisations (Kanter 1994; Fowler 1997). Recognised for research on effective alliance building, Kanter's (1994) empirical study among "large and small companies in both manufacturing and service industries" (Kanter 1994: 97) and partners from 11 regions worldwide provides a normative framework with which to examine partnership policies and agreements between INGOs and their partner organisations. The framework outlines eight criteria of effective alliances that benchmark INGO partnership policies. Fowler's (1997) measure of "authenticity" provides an alternative set of criteria with which to examine the partnership relations of INGOs. Fowler's criteria suggests a maturity of relationships, and of existing organisational structures and practices that is inconsistent with the nascent development of partnerships between the participant INGOs and partner organisations in this study.

By the late 1990s, the literature suggests there was little evidence of INGO attempts to develop real partnerships (Fowler 1997; Michael 2004). Although the participatory approach is not without criticism, the study sheds some light on partnership development in the intervening years among a selection of INGOs, utilising Kanter's framework as an evaluation tool.

4.2.4 *Criticisms of Participatory Approaches*

In the for-profit sector, the implementation of participatory approaches can require significant changes to organisational structure and rewards systems. New structures are needed to facilitate implementation and employees have increased expectations (Plunkett and Fournier 1991). The process of employee participation often runs "parallel to the main decision-making processes, deals with less crucial issues, and therefore fails to show what influence-sharing behavior could achieve" (Heller et al.

1998: 149). Employee ability to influence organisational decisions (Heller et al. 1998), perceived or otherwise, and the resultant perceived disparities in influence are important considerations for firms in designing mechanisms and processes of organisational participation.

The implementation of participatory approaches in the development sector mirrors the potential for inequality found in the for-profit sector. The power disparities between “unequal development actors” (Lewis 2007: 185), suggest a measure of uncertainty in the sustainability of developing a solid partnership that is echoed throughout the literature, both in terms of stakeholder access to resources and ability to participate in decision-making. As Kothari (2001), Cooke (2001), Cleaver (2001), Hately (1999) and others argue, the adoption of a participatory approach has negative implications as it serves to reinforce the “status quo” power differential between those with access to resources such as INGOs, and those without access such as beneficiaries. For example, Kothari (2001) argues that although it is positioned as a consensus decision-making model, participatory rural appraisal (PRA) overlooks the multifaceted social relations and diverse characteristics in and among community members. Instead, it assumes a homogeneity of characteristics and shared interest. A recognition that everyone has some degree of power in defining the process of participation would give “voice to the voiceless” (Kothari 2001: 141) and go some way to responding to the concerns engendered in the existing model. PRA and its associated techniques fail to promote access to beneficiaries in development programming. Therein lies the inherent contradiction between INGO policy and practice. As Edwards and Fowler (2002) acknowledge, the goals and objectives of NGOs reflect a desire to reduce global inequalities, yet the practice of partnership can exacerbate the very inequalities that NGOs seek to eliminate.

Friedmann (1992), Lister (2000), Kanyinga (1995) and others suggest that such Western models of participation do not match the realities of practices in developing countries. Rather participation strengthens existing inequities between stakeholders, in this instance, INGOs, local NGOs and communities. This makes “true partnership impossible” (Lister 2000: 236). As Kanyinga (1995) notes, few beneficiaries have any knowledge of or understand the structure, budget and resource availability of INGOs, a finding that limits information sharing between organisations and aid recipients, thus compounding stakeholder inequalities. One of the biggest critiques of PRA as a participatory technique has been the lack of behaviour and attitudinal change (Cornwall et al. 2001: 17–18) evident from its

use. There is little change in the internal organisational processes of local organisations to adopt a participatory approach, thereby reinforcing the existing power dynamics among stakeholders and hierarchical structures. Changes in these power dynamics and hierarchical structures are essential to successful implementation of a participatory approach.

The research of participation in organisational decision-making centres primarily on beneficiaries. It is an objective of the study to examine the patterns of INGO staff participation in organisational decisions. According to Suzuki (1998) and others, staff participation in decision-making is limited by the adoption of decentralised bureaucratic structures by INGOs. These institutionalised hierarchies increase tension and conflict between Headquarters and field offices, and erode staff expectations of a value-led organisation (Dichter 1999; Suzuki 1998; Fowler 1997; Edwards and Hulme 1992; Hodson 1992). Billis and MacKeith (1993) find that staff expectations of their own participation in organisational decision-making is shaped by their tense relationship with Headquarters, fostered by ever changing internal decision-making processes sensitive to organisational structural pressures such as organisational growth, bureaucratisation and professionalisation. As a result, the space for staff participation increasingly narrows (Billis and MacKeith 1993; DiBella 1992; Edwards and Hulme 1992).

From the perspective of the multiple stakeholder groups including INGOs, partner organisations and donors themselves, the approach to partnership is driven by the need for accountability. Based on a study of partnership and power in a US-based NGO, Lister (2000: 234) suggests that financial resource control is determined by the scope of activities. INGO accountability is increasingly directed upwards towards donors who are the source of financial resources given the resource dependency of INGOs. Beneficiaries are further alienated rather than empowered as INGOs and their staff are increasingly distanced from contact with communities in which they work (Fowler 1997) as partner organisations assume intermediary positions.

Changes also occur among partners organisations. Partners may even bypass their northern INGO partners and become direct aid recipients, tying themselves even more closely to donor demands at the expense of the communities they purport to represent (Edwards 1999; Igoe 2003; Shivji 2007; Smillie 1995; Booth 2011). In both instances, the new relations challenge development interventions and sustainability objectives. When this occurs, INGO priorities of donor accountability successfully

undermine any possibility of shared responsibility and mutuality with local partners, key characteristics of partnership development both for beneficiaries and partner organisations.

Donors themselves have placed additional conditionalities and controls on funds, stressing accountability rather than emphasising the participatory process itself (Hately 1999: 10–13). The literature highlights the changed governance and accountability patterns that have alienated partner organisations from communities as their constituencies (McKie 2007; Robinson and Friedman 2007; Lewis 2007). As beneficiaries no longer directly participate in decision-making but rely on partner organisations as their representatives and intermediaries, the distancing between external stakeholders makes partner organisations less appealing to INGOs as potential partners. This trend has the potential to significantly undermine the ability of partner organisations to contribute to community empowerment, a longer-term INGO objective. As the partnership organisations themselves become alienated from local communities and beneficiaries whom they represent in the race for the money, they become clones of INGOs and in so doing decrease their usefulness as local partners.

In sum, the participatory approach has played a significant role in shaping stakeholder relations. The relationship under examination in this study is that between INGOs and partner organisations for the latter's intermediary liaison role between beneficiaries and INGOs. As beneficiary participation and empowerment has given way to partnership with local partner organisations, the impact has been further distancing of beneficiaries in INGO decision-making processes. As INGOs have grown into large, professionalised bureaucracies so too has there been a narrowing of opportunities for staff participation in organisational decision-making.

4.3 FOR-PROFIT SECTOR: PRACTICE OF EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION

Employee participation in organisational decision-making suggests that employees have some influence over organisational decisions based on their input. The opportunity for employees to participate is often provided through traditional means such as newsletters, websites and emails. More collaborative means of communication involve social media, regular meetings with direct supervisors or other staff. Findings from a 2015 survey of firms in the 28 EU member countries found that 48 % report a combination of communication methods. Larger establishments with

younger, more highly educated employees are more likely to utilise more collaborative mechanisms (EuroFound 2015).

While traditional communication tools such as workshops, surveys and employee forums are still used to gather employee input, social media is increasingly favoured by UK employers for its promotion of employee communication and engagement that encourages a measure of reflectiveness found in more traditional forms of communication (CIPD 2014).

Whether classified as engagement, involvement or participation, the opportunity for employees to influence organisational decision-making generates discernable impacts on organisational performance. For example, there is greater frequency of enhanced performance and profits among European establishments with extensive employee participation (EuroFound 2015).

There is some evidence of the practice of partnership strengthening organisational performance having a detrimental effect on the organisation (Coats 2004; Strauss 2006; Purcell et al. 2003; Kamoche et al. 2004). Evidence from a CIPD-sponsored study of HRM policies and practices in the UK found a direct linkage between employee satisfaction and their influence on organisational decision-making and motivation (Purcell et al. 2003: 65, 69). Lack of employee involvement can have a detrimental impact at the level of a country's human resources. The "brain-drain" in Kenya has been exacerbated by numerous concerns including a perceived "lack of autonomy and participation in decision-making" which have served to undermine the confidence of professional staff (Kamoche et al. 2004: 97).

As described earlier, the term, partnership, used in Western management settings, refers to a participatory approach that seeks to actively engage stakeholders in organisational decision-making. Partnership also describes relationships in the context of worker representation, otherwise known as indirect participation. In unionised firms, in the manufacturing sector in Québec, a Canadian province with above average unionisation rates, partnership is defined as "agreements between competing actors who deliberately choose to cooperate instead of maintaining adversarial relations" (Harrison et al. 2009: 2). In the UK, partnership suggests "working effectively together to achieve shared or complementary goals" (Guest and Peccei 2001: 212). Both definitions emphasise collaboration among stakeholders, workers and their employers.

Indirect participation classically takes the form of membership of an autonomous trade union or professional association that represents

employees' views to management. Both the UK and Québec private sectors are well known to trade union historians and labour relation specialists as strong union advocates. Their contrasting approaches to partnership are illustrative of the challenges to introducing such a practice into the workplace.

Evidence from the UK and Québec private sectors provide a selective and contrasting experience of the application of the partnership model in a unionised environment (McIlroy 2008; Kirkham 2006; Harrison et al. 2009). According to McIlroy (2008), while the New Labour government in the UK (1997–2010) encouraged the development of a partnership model with unions, government preference remained with employer-led institutions and a limited union role in the regulation of skill building and learning and development programmes. Union opposition to the partnership approach is evidenced for example in a statement by Tony Woodley, General Secretary of the Transport and General Workers Union, “we’ve turned our back on the phoney partnership approach of the 90s” (Kirkham 2006: 3) that clearly reflects the lack of support for a particular type of partnership relationship between the government, as employer, and the union.

In contrast to the UK experience, Harrison et al. (2009), describes a positive experience of workplace partnership in Québec that highlights the role of union representatives as “innovators” for their ability to balance the traditional union role to protect the “socio-economic needs” of workers while ensuring workers participate in management decision-making (Harrison et al. 2009: 3). Their findings suggest that evidence of successful partnership at the organisational level is due to (a) the union capacity to balance representation and partnership,

(b) involvement of union members “through decentralisation of decision-making away from top management”, and (c) the voluntary nature of the partnerships themselves in the absence of state involvement (Harrison et al. 2009: 14).

This section has highlighted that partnership, a practice that facilitates employee participation in decision-making, is a contributory factor to organisational performance. Empirical evidence gathered from the UK and Québec private sectors shows that the partnership model proved itself more effective in Québec, where employee participation was recognised as a benefit to the organisation by all stakeholders, a finding that was corroborated by a CIPD-sponsored study of HRM practices in 12 UK-based firms in which workers expressed increased dissatisfaction and decreased

motivation in the face of limited opportunity to participate in organisational decision-making (Purcell et al. 2003).

4.4 NON-PROFIT SECTOR: PRACTICE OF EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION

Originally encouraged as an efficiency measure by donors, the practice of participation was focused on community involvement in project implementation through activities such as PRA. In order to achieve longer-term objectives to promote local community ownership and assumption of responsibility for resource allocation, INGOs such as Action Aid, embraced empowerment, hosting workshops and other fora for beneficiaries. As the number of local organisations representing local communities grew, INGOs recognised their intermediary role and adopted a partnership approach to further the longer-term INGO objectives of community empowerment. Participatory approaches adopted by donors and INGOs are reflected in inclusive terms such as “enabling participation” and “joint decision-making” (Chapman et al. 2009: 166). As presented in this section, the changing terminologies more closely reflect shifting INGO needs at an “institutional imperative” level than a move to increased participation by partner organisations or the communities they represent (Edwards 1999).

4.4.1 *Participation*

Participation has a long history in development. A staple of INGO theory beginning in the 1970s and 1980s (Chambers 1986; Covey 1996; Friedmann 1992; Smillie 1995; Fowler 1997; Murphy 2001), and driven by the ideological “international solidarity” (Lister 2000: 228), donors supported a World Bank-led Learning Group on Participatory Development to investigate the cost/benefit of such an approach in the early 1990s. The report, published in the autumn of 1994, acknowledged that donors “are searching for ways to engage a wider range of stakeholders in development. Participatory approaches are seen to be one answer because by their nature they make development processes more inclusive of a wider range of interested parties” (World Bank 1994: 5). The main findings of the report state that community participation and stakeholder ownership could lead to achievement of sustainable development. Thus, the report’s finding led to the widespread adoption of participation by donor agencies, thereby influencing the trajectory of development programming at the

community level for the next two decades. The terms, participation and empowerment, entered the development mainstream through the World Bank's *Voices of the Poor* report (Narayan et al. 2000), which informed the subsequent World Development Report (WDR) of 2000–2001. Acknowledging the need for efficient and accountable public services, the report emphasises the need for collaboration among stakeholders and “strengthening the participation of poor people in political processes and local decision making” (World Bank 2000–2001: 7).

The literature suggests that donors and INGOs have a responsibility by virtue of their presence in the South, to understand local community goals and objectives and to provide meaningful assistance to local organisations such as community-based organisations and NGOs (Earle 2007; Vincent and Stackpool-Moore 2009; Tembo et al. 2007). The practice of participation provides INGOs with a vehicle to realise this responsibility and to operationalise their stated principles of participation and partnership. With the adoption of participation as a development approach by donors in the new millennium (World Bank 2000–2001), increased funds were channelled to Southern NGOs, either directly or through INGOs as intermediaries, for the purpose of strengthening local institutions.¹ Both the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP) and the People in Aid (PIA) provide operational oversight and promote standardisation and accountability within the sector.

Established in 2003, the HAP published standards for quality management in the development sector. Its purpose is to foster accountability to those receiving humanitarian aid. Participation plays a prominent role in ensuring effective programme management. Among its principles are “participation and informed consent: listening and responding to feedback from crisis-affected people when planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating programmes, and making sure that crisis-affected people understand and agree with proposed humanitarian action and are aware of its implications” (Humanitarian Accountability Partnership 2010: 9). PIA is an agency that promotes HR good practice among agencies in the development sector. With respect to staff participation, Principle 4 of its Code of Conduct requires signatories to engage in, “Dialogue with staff on matters likely to affect their employment enhances quality and effectiveness of policies and practices” (People in Aid 2003: 14). In both organisations, participation is identified as a means of ensuring effective programme management that is expected to produce organisational results and improved performance.

A popular method of participation, PRA, has its origins in Kenya and India in the late 1980s (Kabutha et al. 1989 as cited by Cornwall et al. 2001). Examining the Kenyan experience, Cornwall et al. (2001) identifies existing processes such as “harambee” and community cooperatives as collective self-help groups used for raising funds among communities. The rapid rise in popularity of participatory approaches in the 1990s expanded to include extensive training programmes and subsequently, received increased donor support. The participation model was widely adopted by donors and development organisations with the intention of promoting beneficiary ownership and control of assets so as to improve sustainable livelihoods (Dichter 1999). Korten’s (1987) people-centred approach to development provided a roadmap for the introduction of participation that prioritised local participation and decision-making within a state-supported environment. In his later work, Korten (1990) proposed a four stage transformation of INGOs from welfare provider to active participation in alliances as a model of INGO assistance that emphasises empowerment of local NGOs, through institution building for long-term sustainability. In contrast to the people-centred approach that focuses on beneficiary and community participation at the project level, the latter’s emphasis on institution building foreshadowed the shift by INGOs decades later to the adoption of a partnership approach.

4.4.2 Participation and Power in the Context of INGO Management

No discussion of participation in organisational decision-making in INGOs would be complete without some reference to the inherent power differentials between INGOs, partner organisations and the beneficiaries they represent. This section serves to highlight some of the key power issues in the literature (Cornwall 2004; Lister 2000; Hately 1999). These issues are shaped by the “global language” of participation, empowerment and partnership that reinforces “enduring relations of power and control that serve to exclude the less powerful” (Chambers and Pettit 2004: 138).

Scholars note a differentiation between policy and practice (Chambers and Pettit 2004; Institute of Development Studies 2001). The term, participation, “evokes images of people coming together” (Cornwall 2004: 77). In practice, the information and consultation obligations described in the European Union (EU) directive Article 1(3) enshrine the right to free speech and participation. The directive, implemented between 2005 and 2009, acknowledges that “guaranteed rights to information and

consultation are consistent with the notion that workers should be able to speak freely and receive an intelligent response from their employer” (Coats 2004: 18). The term, empowerment, as described earlier in this chapter, suggests a shift in control to those who are less powerful. In practice, control is often retained at the top of the hierarchy, while those further down the organisational structure realise no change in their power or control over decision-making (Institute of Development Studies 2001). Finally, the term, partnership, refers to a relationship that is characterised by its mutuality and implied sharing. In practice, partnerships between stakeholders such as INGOs and beneficiaries actually strengthen the inequalities because those who hold resources retain control of resources (Lister 2000). Contu and Girei (2014) refer to a “hiatus between rhetoric and reality” in their exploration of NGO partnership in Uganda. Their research findings suggest that “once entered into, such partnerships are largely characterised as top-down relations where one of the parties has little possibility of changing the terms of the relation and has to comply with the demands of the international ‘partner’” (Contu and Girei 2014: 17).

The processes of “enabling participation”, “joint decision-making” and other participatory techniques (Chapman et al. 2009: 166) are methods by which organisations implement a “rights-based approach” to development. The “rights based approach” is described by Action Aid in its organisational strategy as “seeking solutions to poverty through the establishment and enforcement of rights that entitle poor and marginalised people to a fair share of society’s resources” (Action Aid 1999: 12 as cited by Chapman et al. 2009: 168–169). Buttressing these rights are core values including the right to participate in organisational agenda setting that both define and shape the INGO and its staff. However, the comparisons between INGO discourse and action reflect the discursive practices of INGOs that shape the power relations within INGOs and reinforce management’s control over the agenda setting process.

Returning to INGO objectives and the expected results of agency programming as a means for achieving organisational objectives, we recognise the relationship between short and long-term organisational objectives. The short-term objective of project delivery is used as an entry point to realise the longer-term objective of community empowerment discussed earlier in the chapter. INGO success in realising these objectives is dependent upon a participatory language that the literature suggests is flawed in its application, as success requires a power shift from INGOs to beneficiaries. The equivalent action in the for-profit sector would be the assumption of employee ownership. INGOs seem naturally hesitant

to make this shift. INGOs are caught in an upward accountability cycle to donors in order to ensure their own financial probity, and because of the need to preserve their own existence as organisations and structures. Both of these needs could be challenged by the attainment of community empowerment. The literature is critical of the application of partnership as a Western model that perpetuates the supremacy of Northern organisations and their legitimacy (Lister 2000). Efforts of organisations such as Action Aid International to effect participatory programme such as Accountability, Learning and Planning System (ALPS) have been documented in the literature (Chapman et al. 2009; Owusu 2004).

In many country programmes, there is little relationship between the service-delivery elements of our work and other components of ActionAid's approach (for example mobilisation of the poor, political and legal advocacy). Different approaches seem to coexist with programme staff often confused about how to link the two approaches and achieve greater synergy and impact in our work. Further work is needed with staff to help them understand the links between different kinds of work. (Chapman et al. 2009: 181)

Regardless of the partnership approach adopted by INGOs, success is measured using criteria that are established by those at the top of the organisational hierarchy. The criteria are set by those in a position of power (Hardy and Phillips 2008), who are either unable or unwilling to delve more deeply in exploring partnership results.

This section has highlighted the existing discrepancies between INGO discourse and action with respect to the participatory approach. This is evident in INGO retention of decision-making control and lack of beneficiary involvement. Both INGOs and their partner organisations have become increasingly distanced from beneficiaries. Furthermore, the participatory approaches whether in discourse or practice make no mention of a role for INGO staff whether in a direct participatory role in organisational decision-making or in a facilitation role to encourage greater beneficiary participation.

4.5 INGO EXPERIENCE IN KENYA

A review of agency principles finds an emphasis on issues of accountability, empowerment, partnership and participation. The stated principles confirm the significance of participation and partnership to the agencies, and

their ability to realise their goals and objectives, particularly the long-term objective of community empowerment.

Although criticisms have been levelled at INGOs for a lack of transparency and openness in sharing information with both beneficiaries and partner organisations, INGOs are anxious to forge new relationships. There is evidence of an apparent shift in organisational priorities as INGOs seek to formalise partnership relations between themselves and partner organisations. From interviews with INGOs, we learn that three of six agencies (**Agencies B, E and F**) have introduced partnership policies.

A more detailed review of strategic plans, annual reports and partnership policies (where available) for each of the three agencies uncovers details of agency intentions. The majority of documents were provided to the author directly by the agency, with the exception of the annual reports that were accessed from agency websites. Collectively, these documents are a rich source of information that illustrates the participation models adopted by each of the three INGOs, and contributes to an understanding of agency rationale behind their actions.

4.5.1 Recent Shifts in the Development of Partnership Relations

INGOs recognise that past attempts to work with partner organisations were unsustainable. They were short-term interventions that, while easily reportable and measurable, created a dependency culture. Moreover, beneficiaries were often alienated from both organisations. These interventions failed to address the underlying causes of poverty and economic, political and social vulnerability. In an attempt to overcome the challenges of previous efforts, some INGOs made longer-term commitments to specific marginalised and vulnerable groups in collaboration with partner organisations in the form of partnership agreements.

The agreements reflect a shift in management thinking from the traditional, short-term project implementation approach to long-term, programme-based initiatives implemented through or alongside partner organisations. The new relations are characterised by shared responsibility that requires INGO management to relinquish control over decision-making. Partner organisations and the beneficiaries they represent benefit directly from the approach.

A review of agency data finds three agencies (**Agencies B, E and F**) actively pursuing partnership development. One agency (**Agency B**) relies solely on its partner organisations for programming implementation, while

another two agencies (**Agencies E and F**), adopt a dual approach, with some programmes implemented directly by the agency itself and other projects implemented via partner organisations. From a review of agency documentation, all three agencies institutionalise their partnership policies across all aspects of their respective organisations using a mainstreamed approach. This approach ensures that programming development and implementation, as well as strategic planning at the organisational level includes feedback from partner organisations and beneficiaries.

Formalisation of partner relations is an important stage of partnership development. **Agency B** adopts a multi-stakeholder approach that ensures partners contribute to all aspects of its programming but stops short of formalising agreements with its partners. **Agency E** implements partnership forums to gather feedback directly from its partner organisations as to how they could improve their stakeholder relations and their partnership approach. The agency drafts concrete action plans for follow-up of partner feedback but does not formalise the relationship through partnership agreements, instead preferring to retain an informal approach. **Agency F** categorises its partners according to their contribution, whether technical services, implementing or strategic partners. The agency prepares partnership agreements tailored to each partner. The agreements outline the roles and responsibilities of the partner organisation and the agency to work collectively using shared resources to develop activities and interventions. **Agency F** also implements a practice of partner forums to gather feedback from partner organisations but does not draft action plans.

The development of partnership policy and agreements is a recent phenomenon for the agencies initiated in late 2010. The policies and agreements under examination were initially drafted by the INGOs themselves before distribution to partner organisations for comment and were a work-in-progress at the time of the interviews.

While all three agencies make provision for capacity building, it is **Agency F** that requires clear definition of its process of relationship building and capacity development of its partner organisations, with the requirement that it be partner led. As described in its policy document,

we cannot emphasise enough the importance of identifying, together with the partner, the most effective and relevant capacity building interventions, strategies and tools, since ad hoc trainings, audits and action plans have proved to be ineffective and frustrating for both us and our partners. This means that capacity strengthening must be mutually prioritised, but owned and driven by the organisation receiving the assistance. (**Agency F**)

This is the first evidence among the six agencies of a stated shift of resource control to a local partner, where it is the partner organisation itself that is responsible for decision-making over resource spending and over who will benefit from its own actions within a broader arrangement of mutuality. This does not appear among the other agencies. By its actions, **Agency F** moves closer to Chapman et al.'s (2009) description of an organisation that implements a rights-based approach to development. The apparent shift in power relations at **Agency F** mitigates to some degree Lister's (2000) concerns that in partnership agreements, local NGOs as partner organisations will continue to function within a dominant paradigm led by INGOs.

Kanter's (1994) normative framework facilitates a review of the formalisation of partner relations by INGOs in Kenya. The findings provide important insights into partnership development as seen in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 demonstrates the provisions of each agency in its partnership policies and agreements when measured against Kanter's (1994) framework. In terms of "individual excellence" or recognition of partner contribution, the policies of all three agencies recognise that partners have something to contribute to the development of the relationship, whether through input to decision-making or feedback in partner forums. While the strategic importance of partnership is implied in **Agency E**'s language, **Agency B** explicitly recognises the long-term process of partnership development and the shared interests and vision among stakeholders. **Agency F** echoes these sentiments with an additional proviso that partnership is a strategic alliance.

Recognition of interdependence and the complementary skills that each partner brings to the relationship is limited at **Agency B** to a collective commitment to work together, whereas **Agencies E** and **F** both recognise the complementarity of each other's work and the need for mutual capacity building. With respect to investment, it is **Agency E** that most clearly articulates that funds and training be provided to partner organisations, while **Agency F** states outright that partners share financial resources, and **Agency B** acknowledges a need to "secure resources and technical support". Sharing of information and communication is widely interpreted by the agencies, as **Agency B** refers to partner feedback, **Agency E** agrees to share donor reports and appoints a Liaison Officer for each partnership and **Agency F** agrees to share both non-financial and technical resources.

Shared operations and integration is identified by **Agency F** as joint accountability, **Agency E** acknowledges programme design, budgeting and

Table 4.1 Examination of partnership documentation at participant INGOs

| <i>Criteria (Kanter 1994)</i> | <i>Agency B</i> | <i>Agency E</i> | <i>Agency F</i> |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Individual excellence (recognise something to contribute) | * | * | * |
| Importance (strategic objectives) | * | | * |
| Interdependence (complementary skills) | | * | * |
| Investment (willing to put money to show commitment) | | * | |
| Inform (shared communication) | | * | |
| Integration (shared ways of operating) | * | | |
| Institutionalisation (clear responsibilities and decision mkg) | * | | * |
| Integrity (mutual trust) | | | * |

Source: Author compilation based on research findings

monitoring as areas in which they need to improve shared information, and **Agency B** defines integration as shared activities and programmes, and identification of common working structures. The institutionalisation of partnership by the stakeholder groups provides for agreed upon roles and responsibilities, working standards, procedures, deliverables and time frames at **Agencies B** and **F**. These practices may be present at **Agency E** but were not made explicit, and the agency acknowledged that contracts between themselves and their partners are not always followed. Finally, **Agency F** is the only agency to explicitly reference integrity and mutual trust.

INGOs recognise that past interventions characterised as short-term, easily reportable, measurable and responsible for the creation of a dependency culture fail to address the underlying causes of poverty and vulnerability experienced by local communities. Through the adoption of a partnership approach that includes longer-term commitments to specific marginalised and vulnerable groups in collaboration with partner organisations, INGOs seek to address the underlying causes of poverty. Such commitments require a shift in management practice from the traditional, short-term project implementation to longer-term, programme-based initiatives implemented through local NGOs as partner organisations.

4.5.2 *Formalisation of Relations*

The current emphasis on formalisation of partnership relations suggests that INGOs are anxious to enshrine the details of these relationships with

their partners to ensure that both sides share a common understanding of the basis for the relationship and its expected evolution. Based on the normative framework (Kanter 1994), evidence confirms that each of the agencies demonstrates a majority of “good partnership” criteria in the content of their partnership policies and agreements.

The formalisation of partner relations is addressed in a variety of ways by different agencies. There are three fundamental elements of successful partnerships, namely mutuality to add value, future opportunities for collaboration and interpersonal connections (Kanter 1994). **Agency E** uses partner forums, from which to gather feedback and draft detailed action plans, outlining organisational responses to partner input. The prioritisation of partnership forums as its primary means of communication with its partners affords the agency an opportunity to build interpersonal connections that, according to Kanter (1994), are one of the fundamental aspects of collaborative alliances. In comparison, **Agency F** assumes the most direct approach to formalising a relationship with its partners. As outlined in its partnership policy and accompanying agreements, the relationship reflects “trust, equality, and mutual commitment”, one in which there is an opportunity for “building personal relations”. Both of these phrases contain the fundamental elements identified by Kanter (1994) of successful partnerships, mutuality and interpersonal connections. Of all the agencies, **Agency F** appears to most clearly signal the potential for strong, collaborative alliances through the content of its partnership agreements.

There is shared language across agencies indicating that they encourage participation in organisational decision-making, working in partnership with partner organisations, governments and donors, and accountable to stakeholders for promotion of the agency’s partnership policy. As described earlier, INGOs include a common vocabulary of participation, empowerment and partnership in their operational policies, and suggest that there is a role for beneficiaries in organisational decision-making. The vocabulary is a common development discourse that reflects donor demands for a participatory approach.

The findings from an examination of partnership policies signal an important change in organisational strategy for those INGOs that have adopted partnership policies and a longer-term commitment to partnership development. The formalisation of existing relationships is important for partner organisations as it reflects a longer term commitment by the INGO that includes not only a sharing of financial and non-financial resources, but is shaped by local institutional development. While capacity

building or technical support that reflects partner needs is a clear component of institutional development, the opportunity to participate in the strategic and annual planning exercises of the INGO, and to share activities, programmes and resources as outlined in the partnership policies suggests a trend towards more inclusive partnership development by these agencies.

Considering the role of INGO staff in the process of participation, a review of agency documentation finds that **Agency D** explicitly commits to staff participation within its policy documents, “to encourage and provide opportunity for staff communication and involvement in matters of their concern”, while three of six participant agencies (**Agencies B, E and F**) recognise staff value, both as an “asset” and as contributors to organisational performance. The remaining two organisations did not recognise staff in their strategic documents. While all organisations use participatory language, it is a practice that, with one exception, is not made explicit by management in recognising staff as a stakeholder group.

The findings of the document review suggest that there have been attempts by agencies to operationalise the spirit and language of participation contained in their partnership policies into practice as evidenced by the formalisation process. That this is a new phenomenon (beginning in 2010–2011), suggests that these agencies have only recently begun to formalise their participatory approach. However, it is an approach targeted at partner organisations largely to the exclusion of final beneficiaries and INGO staff. Beyond the formalisation process, the next section examines participatory mechanisms to understand the processes by which stakeholder participation occurs.

4.5.3 Participatory Mechanisms: Implications for Input

Both input and communication frame an understanding of the available mechanisms or tools by which staff, partner organisations and beneficiaries, collectively participate in and contribute to organisational decision-making. Communication opportunities can facilitate involvement and participation by INGO staff, partner organisations and beneficiaries in organisational decision-making. As such, the participatory mechanisms that make communication possible are an important determinant of stakeholder relations. This section describes the mechanisms themselves, in the context of agency principles of participation and partnership and how staff, beneficiaries and partner organisations use the mechanisms.

Organisations were asked to provide the author with sample documentation, including minutes of staff meetings, strategic planning meetings and HR surveys, where undertaken, as well as stakeholder meetings and workshops, project evaluations and beneficiary surveys in order to shed light on the types of participatory mechanisms available to staff, beneficiaries and partner organisations. A review of documentation from each agency reveals a range of mechanisms to facilitate communication between stakeholder groups and to encourage stakeholder participation.

Participatory Mechanisms Available to INGO Staff

Drawing on the review of secondary data as well as interviewee discourse, the research findings demonstrate that there are multiple avenues available to staff to provide input to organisational decision-making. These mechanisms are identified by agency in Table 4.2.

In Table 4.2, the mechanisms range from management-led forms of “direct” participation to more “indirect” forms such as staff councils. An examination of interviewee discourse confirms that all of the agencies hold regular staff meetings, encourage staff to participate in the strategic planning process, and provide a grievance procedure. The HR Manager acts as a link between staff and management in all agencies with one exception, and formally elected staff representation are in place at two agencies (**Agencies B** and **G**) at the country level. Formal union representation of Headquarters staff only occurs at two agencies (**Agencies B** and **D**), but this form of representation is not extended to staff at the country level. Five of six agencies initiated their own worldwide staff surveys from their respective Headquarters.

Table 4.2 Staff participation mechanisms

| <i>Issue</i> | <i>B</i> | <i>C</i> | <i>D</i> | <i>E</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>G</i> |
|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Staff meetings | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| HR liaison role | | * | * | * | * | * |
| Union (at Headquarters) | * | | * | | | |
| Staff council, association, representatives | * | | | | | * |
| Grievance procedure | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| HR surveys across the organisation | * | * | * | | * | * |
| Strategic planning Committee, online, meetings | * | * | * | * | * | * |

Source: Author compilation based on research findings

While the majority of the participatory mechanisms are self-explanatory, the staff representation models at **Agencies B** and **G** are distinct. Agency **G** implemented an in-house model of representation, electing two staff representatives per field office. A strong manager in the field encourages staff to raise issues and deal with concerns at the area level rather than be escalated to the national office in Nairobi. The position has specific terms of reference, and staff representatives tend to operate within these boundaries.

Regular email communication from the staff representative ensures that staff are aware of issues and concerns, particularly those before management. Issues are normally resolved at the country level rather than elevated to Headquarters.

In contrast, at **Agency B**, staff representation at the country level is part of a larger structure across the agency worldwide, of multiple councils with staff representation functioning at all levels of the organisation. According to a Front-Line Manager, it is a “recognised body of workers who could now represent the welfare of workers to management and inform the policy making process”. The Country Director confirmed the importance of the Council, “from them (the Country Council) I get a lot of information I would not normally get”.

There are defined terms of reference for the council representatives whose input is regularly requested by the employer at all levels of the organisation on proposals that could impact staff such as structural changes. Regular Country Council level meetings address issues specific to the Country office, but also issues that could have wider impact across the organisation. The council structure is replicated in all other countries where the agency operates.

I find that staff representation exists in two forms: firstly, an in-house structure comprised of either elected representatives more akin to a union or a liaison role held by the Head of HR; or secondly, agency-wide representation existing across all levels of the organisation. All agencies, regardless of their staff representation model, host staff meetings, encourage staff participation in strategic planning and have a grievance procedure. The next section presents details of the participatory mechanisms available to beneficiaries and partner organisations.

Participatory Mechanisms for Beneficiaries and Partner Organisations

Drawing on documentation from each agency, Table 4.3 summarises the range of participatory mechanisms available to beneficiaries and partner organisations of INGOs in Kenya.

Table 4.3 Beneficiary and partner organisation participatory mechanisms

| <i>Issue</i> | <i>B</i> | <i>C</i> | <i>D</i> | <i>E</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>G</i> |
|--------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Workshop | * | | | | | |
| Meeting | | * | | * | * | * |
| Surveys | | | * | | | |
| Evaluation | | * | | * | | |
| Forums | | * | | * | * | |

Source: Author compilation based research findings

There are five different types of participatory mechanisms used by organisations to gather feedback from beneficiaries and partner organisations as presented in Table 4.3. These mechanisms include regular meetings between beneficiaries and staff to share information and garner feedback, stakeholder workshops and meetings, community evaluations, partnership forums and partner surveys. Regular meetings to exchange information are the most prevalent form of communication between the organisation and its beneficiaries used by four of six agencies.

Of the six participant organisations, three agencies (**Agencies C, D** and **E**) undertook partner surveys or beneficiary evaluations that captured beneficiary and partner organisations' perceptions of participation. **Agency D** was participant in two external surveys among partner organisations in the development sector. One INGO survey was conducted in Kenya to assess existing partnership approaches and the second survey among INGOs globally measured partner satisfaction with agency support. Both **Agencies C** and **E** conducted in-house surveys among their partners and local communities to measure community participation and capacity development. At **Agency C**, a partner evaluation of their programme "to enable poor and marginalised communities dependent on agriculture to articulate their rights and advocate for policies that benefit their development" provided an opportunity for partner organisations to provide their input to the organisation and to identify whether they felt the programme had met its goal which was to contribute to increased knowledge at the grassroots level and to develop the capacity of communities to advocate for their own interests. At **Agency E**, feedback from the partners' review meeting noted challenges both in communication and in timely release of funds in the opinion of partner organisations. **Agency E** took action to respond to both beneficiary and partner concerns by drafting an action plan that it is in the process of implementing to improve agency-partner relations.

In summary, this section highlights the process of stakeholder participation in decision-making through a review of available mechanisms and agency discourse. Participatory mechanisms to facilitate communication are adopted by all agencies consistent with their stated principles of participation. The mechanisms are, for the most part, for the purposes of information sharing between stakeholders, providing forums for staff input at staff meetings, during strategic planning sessions and through grievance procedures. Staff representation through “indirect” participation is evidenced by the presence of formally elected staff representatives in **Agency G** and the presence of staff councils at **Agency B**. Beneficiary and partner organisations provide input through workshops and meetings as well as in-house evaluations and externally conducted surveys. Meetings are the most popular forum for information sharing between INGOs and beneficiaries and partner organisations. In the following section, a review of the use of participatory mechanisms by staff, beneficiaries and partner organisations highlights who among the stakeholders has an opportunity to speak, what is said, and management response to input.

4.5.4 Stakeholder Use of Participatory Mechanisms

The purpose of this section is to identify “who speaks” and “on what issues”, and management’s response to stakeholder input. Specifically, staff input to organisational decision-making is examined. Major management issues over the past two years identified by interviewees include organisational growth and development, and budget cuts.

Staff Participation in Organisational Decision-Making

There is evidence of systematic control of organisational decision-making in each of the participant agencies by Headquarters and senior management on major management issues. Staff input on key management issues such as organisational growth and budget allocations is minimal as final decisions remain at the top of the management hierarchy, often outside the country of operation at the Headquarter level. In three agencies (**Agencies E, F and G**), senior management at the country level made decisions on organisational growth. For the two agencies faced with budget cuts, **Agencies B and D**, the Headquarters drove decision-making on funding cuts to programmes with limited staff consultation. On less financially driven issues of recruitment and compensation, staff appear to have greater input and receive a favourable response from management. Management recognises the salience of stakeholder claims that in specific cases, affects their own

conditions of service. The evidence of staff voice in facilitating the participation of beneficiaries and partner organisations suggests that staff have considerable impact.

Strategic planning is more often driven by formal approaches from Headquarters that facilitate staff participation within pre-determined limitations. Three of the six agencies, (**Agencies B, D and E**), identify a formal process of staff participation in strategic planning. The experience of **Agency E** in its recent strategic planning process is described by the Assistant Country Director and provides an example of what ultimately became top-down decision-making, “it took us about 5 months of planning which involved 6 or 7 workshops with staff in all field sites. ... We went out to all the sites and had workshops with all the teams”. Discussions at the senior management team (SMT) level followed the workshops, after which input from external stakeholder groups and Headquarters staff were gathered before the plan was finalised by the SMT.

At two agencies, (**Agencies C and G**), the strategic planning processes are driven by senior management. One agency, **Agency F**, provided no details of staff participation in strategic planning per se but highlighted the role of Area Managers who hold responsibility for transference of staff input on structural change to the SMT in Nairobi. The importance of staff participation in strategic planning is emphasised by a senior manager of an external agency who recalls the words of their agency’s CEO, “we are not going to be relevant unless we keep making sure that people who are implementing everyday, that their opinions are incorporated into our strategic decision-making”.

Beneficiary and Partner Organisation Participation

This section presents details of beneficiary and partner organisation participation in organisational decision-making in INGOs. All agencies consider that beneficiary and partner organisations have some involvement in the process of organisational decision-making of the INGO but as is evident, there is wide variance in classification across agencies.

Beneficiary contribution is related to programme identification, design and development. Of note, at **Agency B**, partner organisations are identified through a “very extensive consultative process” and are considered the “source of solutions at the local level” through their involvement in project design and implementation, though the agency retains control over decision of geographic location of operations. **Agencies F and G** suggest that as there are presently methods for ongoing receipt of beneficiary

input, there is no use for formal participatory mechanisms as evidenced at the other agencies. **Agency F** relies on complaints and feedback mechanisms, while informal meetings at **Agency G** provide sufficient opportunity for feedback. At **Agency C**, management suggests that community capacity development has encouraged greater beneficiary participation. At **Agency D**, partner organisations lead community participation in a process that management considers very participatory. However, from the perspective of the partner organisations at **Agency D**, there is insufficient sharing of information and opportunities to contribute. **Agency E** actively responds to beneficiary input through its drafting of an action plan.

Partner organisations have assumed a representational role on behalf of beneficiaries. Involvement of partner organisations is encouraged to a greater extent than that of beneficiaries as partner input is sought on strategic planning and proposal development, whereas the beneficiary voice is absent on these issues.

All stakeholder groups are able to participate to some degree in organisational decision-making, though participation occurs within boundaries established by the agencies using formal approaches emanating most often from Headquarters. Staff participation is greater than that afforded either beneficiaries or partner organisations but is limited to more immediate issues such as recruitment and compensation, while decisions on major management issues such as organisational growth and development, and budget cuts remain at the top of the management hierarchy.

Beneficiary contribution is primarily on issues of programme identification, design and development but it is unclear how much of their input is actually taken on board by management as it is staff as internal stakeholders who are the first to speak on such issues. While beneficiaries participate in programming review, the results of which feed into the strategic planning process, beneficiaries are neither directly involved in the development of the strategic documents nor hold a seat at the table in most instances. Partner organisations are provided with opportunities to participate to a greater extent than beneficiaries and their input sought on issues of strategic planning and proposal development in some instances.

Staff expectations of a participatory role exist (Billis and MacKeith 1993; Hodson 1992). As noted by a Front-Line Manager,

My observation in general is that staff would want to have more consultation even in Kenya at least that is how people share their opinions; why are management doing it this way? Why not that way? Why are we not informed? Why we are not even involved? (**Agency B**)

In interpreting this observation, is the possibility that staff have expectations of a role in organisational decision-making. It would suggest that management response to input and prioritisation of staff claims are important to staff.

4.5.5 *Control of Participation in Practice*

An analysis of interviewee discourse on stakeholder control examines the use of language by stakeholder groups including management, staff, partner organisations and beneficiaries. This provides insights into the power relations between stakeholder groups that are inherent in organisational hierarchies. Stakeholder analysis has not been applied by INGOs to an examination of the stakeholder groups within the INGO themselves according to a former senior manager from an agency external to the study.

The following is a systematic approach to present study findings, agency by agency. This method highlights one of the important and unexpected findings of the research with respect to organisational culture introduced in Chap. 1. Contrary to Hofstede et al.'s (2010) suggestion that national culture is a determinant of staff attitudes, the ways of speaking and messaging among each agency appear different and unique, reflecting an individual organisational culture. The reader should note that the use of a cross-case analysis to present the data is not meant to suggest that one agency's practice is preferred over the other.

The findings from an analysis of interviewee discourse illustrate how agencies manage and control the practice of participation by different stakeholder groups. Management's recognition of stakeholder groups and specific participatory mechanisms highlights the control they exert over the participatory process, particularly in terms of the salience of stakeholder claims. There is a rich subtext to the messages that is apparent in a juxtaposition of discourse of different interviewees from each agency that highlights the contrasting individual perceptions of the participatory process and provides insight into management's control over the participatory process.

At **Agency B**, a staff council plays an important representational role. Examples of council action to reverse management positions are illustrative of staff's position of strength and power to contribute to organisational decision-making as well as their ability to influence change in a "highly democratic process" and to counter a traditional hierarchical structure. Certainly this impression is borne out by the views of a Front-Line Manager, "the consultative open process encourages me to stay with the

organisation as I would be looking for the environment that would give you more freedom to be innovative and contribute to the direction of the organisation". This perspective is supported by comments from the Country Director who acknowledges that, "staff have a lot of influence especially the senior staff ... they decide which direction you are going in and sometimes you interfere if it's not going well, but if you have the right seniors in a team they shape the strategy of the organisation".

The illustrative example of council "success" is contrasted with the perspective of a Front-Line Manager that there is insufficient consultation in the country office in contrast to other offices where they have worked, citing a lack of staff input and evidence of employee complacency and acceptance of management decision-making. Their opinion is consistent with Hofstede et al.'s (2010) "high power distance" and "uncertainty avoidance" characteristics of developing countries. This narrative is presented by a non-Kenyan and provides a unique perspective on workplace participation that is measurably critical of the process, in comparison to the views presented by the Kenyan interviewees, suggesting a degree of powerlessness felt by the Front-Line Manager to alter the status quo.

While staff participation is a key discussion point for interviewees, responses to questions from the author related to beneficiary participation concentrate on a description of the multi-stakeholder approach adopted by the agency rather than details of actual beneficiary contributions. According to the Country Director, the stakeholders, in this instance, private sector organisations, producer groups and government, work together to develop meaningful partnerships based on empowerment, ownership and sustainability. Thus, in **Agency B**, the community of speakers focuses on staff and management as internal stakeholders and specific external stakeholder groups, to the exclusion of beneficiaries.

As evidenced at **Agency C**, language continues to be a strong connecting force among internal and external stakeholder groups as the terms, "on-going dialogue" and "communication" are used to describe the process of relationship building between the agency and its stakeholders. There is a notable shift in language from reference to "beneficiaries" to the use of the term "partners". As described by a Front-Line Manager,

More and more we are trying not to call them beneficiaries, because when we call them beneficiaries we don't see the active participation from their perspective, but we tend to more and more call them partners, because we believe they are the agents of their own development. It is them to achieve the key outcome of development, it is them who are the key people to do that, not us.

Thus, the shift acknowledges the role of “partners” in “taking their own agenda” albeit with agency assistance and funding. It is an approach that reflects and is consistent with the agency’s interpretation of participation. It also suggests a strengthening of the position of beneficiaries to have greater authority and decision-making power, on par with the position of partner organisations that have greater voice in organisational decision-making. However, it is recognised by a Front-Line Manager that as partner organisations assume ownership of programming, it would be possible to “contemplate the agency disappearing”. While this is not an occurrence that will happen overnight, it reflects the agency’s recognition that its existence is finite with potential for closure once its mandate of local capacity building and empowerment is fulfilled. There are certainly some stakeholder groups in the development sector who would suggest that a measure of agency performance and effectiveness is when that agency is no longer needed.

In recognition of the inherent power structures within the partner-agency relationship created through information and resource exchange, **Agency D** reduced the hierarchical structures through which information flows from the community through local partners to the agency and vice versa by initiating direct community conversations. According to a Programme Coordinator, a dialogue process was initiated known as “participatory integrated community development process”. The process uses local community conversations between the agency and communities as a forum for communities to identify key issues of concern and potential solutions. However, the Coordinator recalls a need for staff intervention into the process when the partner organisation failed to capture community input in a developing proposal. As described by the Coordinator,

the communities came to the participatory forums, identified their strengths and weaknesses, and some of them they want to address HIV and high risk behaviour, cultural norms that put people at risk of HIV ... but it did not make it into the proposal in a way that would have made it desirable because if it did, then my input would have been very minimal.

A reality which created some frustration for the agency.

Staff participation is considered as “just about right” according to the HR Manager who explained the process of staff participation in strategic planning, “the meetings that are lined up for staff and how they will participate and how they will select representation and what their own input will be; they have been given a choice; make their own decisions as to how

they want to participate in the process”. Furthermore, agency expectations are presented to staff, “this is what we want to come up with so we would like you to, as far as possible, to feel free to participate. If you don’t want to have a face to face with someone and say this is my input, this is my contribution, you can do it through whatever means you feel comfortable with”.

The leadership style of senior management also impacts on the method of staff participation as reflected in the following comment by the Country Director,

They (staff) have challenging jobs, they are given enough space to operate, they know that my door is always open, they know that any of them can come into me at anytime; it can be annoying at times but it works. I think that informality is there and they know that, is that good enough? I don’t know ... I think they (staff) feel trusted and I do trust them ... people are given enough scope and if they have good ideas that they bring to the table, they know that they have to have thought it out properly before they come, but if they are good ideas they will be given the capacity to go and work on it.

The evidence of mutual support in agency management and programming is facilitated through the reduced hierarchical structure and levels between senior management and programming staff. That said, it is acknowledged that future growth in the agency in terms of staff numbers could cause the Country Director’s “open-door policy” to be revisited.

For **Agency E**, while beneficiaries and partner organisations have opportunities to participate in organisational decision-making, agency management demonstrates a degree of self-criticism in its handling of the process.

I wish we were more inclusive in terms of community participation, it does not come naturally to a lot of people ... being what it is, it also can be very nebulous, in terms of indicators. ... Partnership never came to us naturally. Some people require more convincing than others, like when you are doing a proposal, you make sure who is with the agency out there and you write them in as a partner. We have to move back and develop ideas with the partner so that you are not waiting for a donors call to come, and only then talk to the partners, said the Assistant Country Director.

The Country Director echoes these points,

I do not think we are great in participation in terms of getting beneficiary/client input into our programmes and I do not think we have the most formal mechanisms for dealing with that and I think part of it ... our programmes are all done through local partners, so we are not the direct implementer or interlocutor with the community. It is being done through our partners and they have different mechanisms and engaging as well. They were even invited to one participation workshop as well. Often when we are asking for participation it is often when we have the programme already designed and all that. It really does need to be at the design stage and one thing I want us to work at more is that continual feedback, so it is not just, 'tell us everything you want right now or how it should be' ... so that we can design something better.

There is a perceived need among senior management to “build staff capacity” in order that they can develop meaningful beneficiary relations as an organisational priority that should be measured as a “performance indicator”.

According to interviewees at **Agency E**, staff participation occurs in two ways: staff meetings, operating both as one-way flows of information and two-way exchange of communication between staff and management, and staff welfare committee. While the latter mechanism is self-explanatory, the staff meetings facilitate information flow from staff through the HR Manager in its liaison role to the SMT. For example, a Senior Director recalled staff input on a compensation issue, “staff were complaining that there was too much inflation. They were asked for their input—propose us a solution, what do you want us to do? People came up with different proposals; some of the saying let’s conduct a survey, let’s see what other NGOs are paying out there”. This input prompted a local salary survey and an identified pay discrepancy was rectified when Headquarters introduced a band system that afforded pay increases for staff. The Senior Director highlighted staff response to the pay increase, “Since we got that (pay increase) everyone is happy and you can imagine it was in July and by September I was having another pay increase. So to me it was a very positive move. I felt this is an office that listens to people and that was purely staff.” This statement suggests that pay acts as a primary determinant of staff satisfaction, motivation and commitment, consistent with the finding of a study of multinational for-profit corporations operational in Kenya (Dimba 2010).

Another method for staff input on issues of concern is through information sharing with their team and department heads within a hierarchical

structure that is a fixed and solid entity in the organisation according to another Senior Director,

In terms of decision-making and management we have more freer more open and it is also very consultative at whatever level. There are no decisions that the CD has made that I have not been aware of, I know I can have a lot of what's going on in logistics, what's going on in HR, what grants we are going for ... (CD) tells us what decisions have been made; how different things are going to be done from now.

It is notable that their statement was prefaced by a characterisation of the participatory process as “more freer, more open” and “very consultative”. This somewhat contrarian perception suggests that there is an information-sharing process but that it is not consultative. The hierarchical structure seems to be accepted by staff as a de facto reality that echoes Hofstede et al.'s (2010) “high power distance” and “uncertainty avoidance” characteristics in developing countries.

“At the field level where we operate, we are very conscious about what the local community says about us” is a statement by a Senior Director that reflects the attitude at **Agency F** of beneficiary participation at an agency that practices both direct implementation and indirect implementation through partner organisations. On issues such as staff recruitment at the field level, local community participation is extremely important particularly for programming in Northeastern Province where there are concerns about clan representation. According to the Country Director,

Beneficiaries are very aware because of the context, last 30–40 years they have only been surviving from NGOs and UN ... they know pretty well what NGOs stand for, what they can expect, and what are these NGOs. They also know very well that the NGOs are here because of their suffering, it is really amazing, this is what we are trying to roll out, as a global organisation, to be accountable to the beneficiaries, to put a complaint and feedback mechanism in place.

International accountability standards such as the HAP require agencies to develop a beneficiary complaint mechanism. Although such a mechanism exists informally in some programming locations, there is recognition by **Agency F** of the necessity to rollout a formal practice that will be operational in all its offices. Agency emphasis is on the service delivery chain and the responsibility of government for delivery of basic services thus efforts

direct beneficiary voice to demand services from government rather than further dependence on INGOs.

At the field level, responsibility rests with the Front-Line Managers to communicate directly both with beneficiaries as well as with agency staff, and to relay this information to the SMT in Nairobi of which they are members. A Front-Line Manager confirmed the agency's reliance on beneficiaries, "beneficiaries are one of our strong stakeholders, and the way we have approached this is to involve them from the beginning of the assessment so that the community identifies a problem and a solution that can be implemented by them". However, in contrast a Senior Director in Nairobi acknowledged some challenges in the relationships between front-line management and staff,

Good Area Managers make the time to, with their teams, go and talk to the communities. We've had problems with Area Managers who never left the office in the entire 10 weeks in the field ... just to get participation in the programmes is a problem. The participation with staff, I think, it's a struggle ... it's a key skill for the Area Managers how do they really represent the voice of their office, not just their own opinion. Particularly when you've got this distance management thing, its not like this is our only office where we can just call everyone into the canteen, we can never get all our staff in one place at one time ... we are constantly getting the feeling that staff don't have a clue what is going on because the area managers are not sharing.

The power dynamics underlying the communication challenges evident at **Agency F** are a common challenge to INGOs as a whole according to a former senior manager from an external agency that notes that in their experience, they have never seen a field manager assume responsibility for managing the power dynamics among staff.

Staff participation at **Agency F** occurs within pre-determined boundaries as evident in the following, according to a Senior Director,

What I remember when the decision was made to change the structure, we had a general staff meeting called in Nairobi and the Country Director made the presentation, explained the reasons to everyone as to why we were doing what we were doing. All the points were brought up and explanations given as to why we were doing what we were doing. And the same was done in the field, and staff were given an opportunity to ask any questions they might have regarding the structure,

This perspective is confirmed by a Front-Line Manager, decision-making I must say is consultative, as much as the Nairobi SMT makes the final decision, it is consultative and staff are given a chance.

For **Agency G**, in response to questioning about its staff representation policy, a Front-Line Manager acknowledged,

I think it's been a plus as this representative is there and you know that the issue will be resolved. You can go to them and you know that management is always open to such cases or hear what you have to say. If you feel that you yourself can't go in there to talk then you have someone who can do that for you. And mostly the staff representative are people who are very strong and aggressive and you can be sure that they will take your grievances and will be prepared to fight for the most positive outcome, so I think it's a plus.

This statement suggests there is an “open door policy” for staff representatives to present both staff concerns and proposed solutions to management. The use of the narrative process extensively by the staff representative aims at strengthening the evidentiary basis for the suggestion that staff participate in organisational decision-making, the success of the process and staff satisfaction with management accessibility and feedback. However, the types of issues brought to management's attention relate to day-to-day practices such as parking, compound security and use of personal airtime, and while significant for those involved, do not provide evidence that staff participation impacts on the broader strategic objectives of the agency.

Beneficiary participation in organisational decision-making is identified as an important contribution. According to the Assistant Country Director, beneficiary input began “when we started implementing the programmes, we were interacting regularly with them ... and then they were the ones who were telling us we want it this way or that way. It continues to be part of the ongoing learning we have as a programme. Programme is heavily influenced by the way the beneficiaries are asking us to look into issues”. However, the Assistant Country Director acknowledged that although both regular and ad-hoc meetings are held between staff and beneficiaries,

we have not been very good at putting complaint mechanisms and stuff like that in place on a formal basis, which we are going to do. We have started engaging in a systematic work plan and how standards can be put in place this year but it is going to take a while.

Personally, I am not too much in favour of formalizing the processes ... I do still believe that staff should go and monitor processes on a regular basis and collect their input and bring it back. Then we can include that in our systematic programming. But if you make it a formal complaint mechanism it can become at times very rigid and be used for the wrong purposes.

4.6 CONCLUSION

As Wood (2010) reminds us, the rates of employee participation in the developing world are generally low. This holds true among INGOs in Kenya. The study finds that management recognition of stakeholder participation within each agency, a method by which they control the participatory process, varies across agencies. Not all interviewees acknowledge the participation of staff, partner organisations and beneficiaries. **Agency C** focuses their comments on beneficiary participation and describes the role of partners for their agencies. Interestingly, at **Agency C**, the use of the term, partner, is used as a synonym for beneficiary, an action that serves to raise the profile of beneficiary as a stakeholder group.

The research study presents clear distinctions between beneficiaries and partner organisations as individual stakeholder groups, given that the term, beneficiary, is still considered normal nomenclature by most agencies and remains distinct from partner organisations. Four agencies (**Agencies D, E, F and G**) comment on both staff and beneficiary participation. **Agency D** provides a favourable impression of participation enjoyed by both staff and beneficiaries, while acknowledging that their participatory process is responsible for side lining partner organisations. **Agency E** highlights the presence of community consultation processes but notes a lack of sufficient skill among staff to effectively engage with beneficiaries. Staff participation is characterised as “consultative” yet final decision-making rests with the Country Director. At **Agency F**, beneficiaries are considered an important stakeholder group with Area Managers playing a significant role in transmission of both staff and beneficiary input to senior management. At **Agency G**, while staff representatives enjoy an open door policy, staff participation is restricted to day-to-day rather than substantive issues. **Agency B** focuses their comments on staff participation with reliance on the staff council to present staff input to management. While staff participation is characterised as “consultative” by some interviewees who acknowledge staff influence, there are others who suggest that there is a lack of staff input and in fact, complacency exhibited by staff towards participation.

Overall, it appears that one-sided consultation and communication summarise the extent of staff participation at most agencies, as decisions rest elsewhere in the organisation. As noted by a Senior Director at **Agency E**, “there is an option of participating. The structure of staff meeting is that we use it as informative or as a communication channel”. Even the most optimistic interviewee noted that current open door policy of **Agency D**’s Country Director could be altered by future impacts of organisational growth. While agencies have cautiously embraced developing relations with beneficiaries and partner organisations, these are constrained by limits in staff skill, and the role accorded to partner organisations as intermediaries, thereby limiting direct contact between INGOs and beneficiaries.

NOTE

1. The adoption of participation as a development model heralded in a new wave of NGOs and Kenya for example saw a 400 % increase in numbers between 1997 and 2006 (Kanyinga et al. 2007). With the rapid increase in numbers, it became apparent that there were no standards of accountability and following a number of highly publicised fiascos as organisations absconded with funds, the HAP, PIA and ALNAP were established as international standards by which INGOs would be measured by their peers. Membership is voluntary, however, which diminishes their effectiveness as watchdog bodies.

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Implications for INGO Management Process

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to consider the findings of the empirical research that compares INGO policy and practice to Western management theory and practice as presented in the previous chapters. This is accomplished through a comparative analysis of research findings of selected HRM policies and practices, specifically, recruitment and selection, and stakeholder involvement in organisational decision-making. The analysis contributes to an understanding of the relationship between HRM policies and practices, and organisational performance in INGOs in Kenya that is the intent of the research.

The study chose to examine recruitment and selection for its determinant role in the identification of candidates with the skills and abilities, and involvement in organisational decision-making as a measure of the opportunity to participate in organisational decision-making, both of which inform the understanding of the relationship between HRM practice and organisational performance. Using Western HR management theory and models to frame the examination, this chapter presents a comparative analysis of the research findings, and describes the potential impacts on organisational performance.

Through an examination of the recruitment strategies of participant agencies, challenges to INGO selection practices in comparison to Western HR management theory and for-profit industry practice are identified. A

comparative analysis of INGO policies and principles, and INGO practice examines stakeholder involvement using Kanter's (1994) normative framework, outlined in Chap. 4. From this examination, we learn the degree to which INGOs engage with their partner organisations and the experience of staff participation.

Patterns of stakeholder involvement in organisational decision-making are presented, where stakeholders are identified as both internal to the organisation (staff and management) and external to the organisation (beneficiaries and partner organisations). The chapter concludes with an analysis of the research findings using Purcell et al.'s (2003) model described in Chap. 1 to identify the potential impacts of the selected HRM practices of INGOs in Kenya on organisational performance.

5.2 RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

The process of recruitment and selection seeks to identify qualified and capable staff that can be integrated into the organisation such that their knowledge, skills and abilities can be harnessed to positively impact organisational performance and the realisation of organisational goals and objectives (McCourt 2006; Kamoche et al. 2004; McCourt and Eldridge 2003; Boxall and Purcell 2008). As an identified theme throughout the book, an organisation's human resources are an important organisational asset, particularly in the non-profit sector. The identification of qualified staff is the principal method for developing these assets.

Drawing both on documentation and on interviewee discourse, the research study develops an image of the recruitment and selection process of INGOs operating in Kenya through an examination of recruitment strategies and selection practices.

5.2.1 *Recruitment Strategies*

Recruitment strategies, measured by management capacity and labour market power, facilitate a cross-case analysis of organisations based on their engagement in the selection process and effective utilisation of resources, as well as power to recruit in the labour market (Boxall and Purcell 2008). The use of Boxall and Purcell's interpretative tool to examine recruitment strategies of INGOs contributes to an understanding of management's interest in the strategic prioritisation of recruitment in the organisation. Participant agencies demonstrate a balanced

use of resources and recruit from a heterogeneous pool of candidates. Candidates at all agencies, with the exception of **Agency B**, are scored against prepared job specifications and their ability to meet stated qualifications rather than their ability to bring new ideas on board the INGO. Overall, the findings suggest high levels of management capacity to recruit a diverse workforce.

With respect to labour market power, the agencies studied could not compete with the compensation packages offered by agencies such as the UN in Nairobi. As an operational entity in the development sector, the UN agencies appeal to staff seeking stable, guaranteed long-term employment. There is no recognition that lower wages could act as a screening device, as described in Chap. 2, such that the agencies would attract staff committed to the values of the organisation rather than its salary grid. Thus, participant agencies find themselves limited in their ability to attract skilled candidates which positions them at the low end of Boxall and Purcell's (2008) high-/low-rating scale of labour market power. INGOs in the study have lower levels of labour market power to attract and retain candidates when measured against some other players such as the UN in the development sector in Kenya. The combined examination of recruitment strategies, based on the application of the high-/low-rating scale of both higher levels of management capacity and lower levels of labour market power, classifies the INGOs as "flexible" structures. As illustrated in Chap. 2, low levels of management capacity would have meant that organisations are conservative, recruiting from a homogeneous group and do not utilise resources to full advantage.

However, INGOs are aware of their agency's positioning with respect to the labour market and consider their packages to be comparable to other INGOs. This finding from an analysis of discourse suggests that interviewees are intent on messaging to the author that their organisations are inclusive, sensitive to local demographic issues, and manage resources efficiently. However, ever-changing labour market conditions require that agencies continually monitor their position to ensure that they remain competitive.

Management's recruitment capacity indicates an effort at prioritisation of the HR function. Although INGOs are unable to compete on compensation with UN agencies, the next section analyses INGO selection practices with particular emphasis on job posting, selection methods and employment security which are measures of attraction for potential recruits.

5.2.2 *Selection Practices*

With an understanding of the recruitment strategies adopted by the participant organisations, I turn to an examination of selection practices among the sampled INGOs in comparison to organisations responding to CIPD's annual recruitment and retention survey in the UK (CIPD 2009). The data in the CIPD survey is a useful comparator as a reflection of industry HRM practice.

Structured interviews and tests of specific skills are used at a significantly higher rate among the INGOs than among UK-based organisations in the CIPD study (CIPD 2009). Of note is the use of an assessment centre as a selection method by **Agency B**. There is no comparable rating for this selection method in the UK-based study. The assessment centre is used for evaluation of candidate potential for future learning and development. According to **Agency B**'s recruitment documents, candidates are queried as to their motivation for the job and the "value-add" they could bring to the organisation; their understanding of and contribution to shaping the development agenda; their use of knowledge and sharing of lessons learned; and identification of the value of performance management to the organisation. These elements move beyond the standard interview questions of candidate experience and achievements, and provide the candidate with an opportunity to contextualise their work, thereby demonstrating potential for future learning and development, as well as their ability to bring new ideas on board to the agency's benefit.

Research interest included internal promotions as part of the selection process, how they are handled and whether internal candidates are given preference over external hires when a position becomes available or is newly created. Although INGOs are unable to compete on compensation, the provision of employment security through internal promotion suggests a benefit that could be attractive to potential recruits. However, internal promotion is used to a lesser extent by INGOs than among UK-based organisations.

The comparative analysis of INGO selection practices with similar practices of UK-based organisations suggests that, for the most part, INGO practices are comparable. However, further examination of the application process, selection methods and the role of selection panels, in comparison to Western HR management theory and models described in Chap. 3, highlights shortfalls in INGO practice. The examination reveals three challenges to the effectiveness of INGO selection practices in the form

of inadequate standardisation of practices, limited use of selection methods and lack of selection panel preparation. Each of these challenges is described below.

Inadequate Standardisation of Practices

There are no user manuals to guide staff throughout the hiring process to ensure consistency and common practice across each organisation. Such a manual could create organisational standards for selection that in addition to the benefit of consistency and standardisation would also contribute to cost-control, and improved quality of recruitment and selection processes (Boxall and Purcell 2008; Cooper et al. 2003). Standardisation of the selection process assumes “the quality of both the overall selection procedure and any outcomes, because optimal selection procedures result in recruitment of better and more productive employees” (Cooper et al. 2003: 79). The inadequacy of standardisation in INGO selection practice has the potential to undermine the advantages realised from INGO recruitment strategies.

Limited Selection Methods

There are two possible shortfalls in the selection practices of participant agencies: the overall choice of selection methods, and the use of the structured interview. Firstly, the participant agencies limit their choice of selection methods to structured interviews and tests for specific skills for most positions. There is only one agency that combines a number of methods in an assessment centre to facilitate staff selection. Utilised in the for-profit sector in the hiring of senior and specialist positions (McCourt and Eldridge 2003), an assessment centre could similarly be helpful in hiring INGO management staff, whether at the junior or more senior levels. However, it is an expensive process. As McCourt and Eldridge (2003: 268) note, it also limits “management discretion”, shifting responsibility and power to the human resource department. Such a transfer of power would strengthen the position of the HR department as a member of the SMT while weakening the power of other SMT members. Maintaining HR practices at the level of a personnel function ensures that top management retains its control over organisational decision-making, mirroring traditional Western management hierarchies and consolidating power at the top of the organisation (McCourt and Eldridge 2003).

Secondly, the structured interview itself as practised by four of six INGOs is a flawed process, according to Western HR management theory,

as organisational “fit” is a significant determinant for these organisations in the hiring process. As evident from research by Cable and Judge (1997), there are both opportunities for improved organisational performance and challenges of increased workforce homogeneity as outcomes from an assessment of person-organisation fit. For INGOs, increased homogeneity of the workforce could undermine management’s recruiting capacity to maintain a heterogeneous workforce, as described in Chap. 2, and reduce the overall transparency of the recruitment process. There is no evidence provided by the organisations of having completed a review of their practice of subjective decision-making, in other words, their use of organisational “fit” to measure its accuracy in identifying suitable candidates who are compatible with organisational culture. The benefits of standardisation noted by Cooper et al. (2003) above are equally applicable in this instance.

Lack of Selection Panel Preparation

Interviewers are not trained to participate as panellists in the recruitment and selection process nor do they have access to a user manual to guide them in observation techniques, lines of questioning and so on to standardise the interview process. These limitations reinforce the perception of the author of a lack of standardisation in interview practice. The lack of panellist preparation poses a high level of risk during the hiring process, where risk is defined as nepotism, discrimination and favouritism (McCourt and Eldridge 2003). While the HR policies of participant agencies contained no discrimination clauses, and two agencies (**Agencies C** and **G**), specifically limited family participation either in the selection process or in actual candidacy, there were no stated limitations on or parameters for the use of subjective decision-making during the recruitment and selection process.

In summary, although there is no comparable UK data available for some details of the recruitment and selection process, the lack of a user manual in combination with a lack of training for panellists suggests reduced consistency in the preparation and conduct of the actual interview itself (McCourt and Eldridge 2003). Furthermore, the discussion of organisational “fit” by the panellists at four of six agencies introduces a measure of subjectivity and potential for favouritism that challenges the transparency of the recruitment and selection process.

The exclusions evident from an examination of the application process, selection methods and the role of selection panels described above reinforce the author’s perception that, for the most part, selection practices in

the participant agencies are still deeply rooted in routine and repetitiveness, with little reflection of good practice. This finding is important given the positive impact of good HRM practices on employee attitudes and organisational commitment that strengthens employee trust in management to meet their expectations (Guest and Conway 1999). The recruitment and selection processes of INGOs in Kenya appear to be on average comparable to UK industry practice but limited when compared to Western HR management theory. As an indicator for wider practice, these findings have implications for organisational performance, and the identification of qualified staff skilled in stakeholder management. While the process of recruitment and selection has been analysed using external sources from industry practice and Western HR management theory and models, the next section adopts a comparative analysis of the INGO participatory approach through a juxtaposition of INGO principles, policies and practice.

5.3 COMPARISON OF INGO PARTICIPATION THEORY AND PRACTICE

Participation policies and principles are found in policy documents, such as annual reports and strategic plans. These INGO documents were examined to identify participatory policies and principles with respect to beneficiary, partner and staff involvement. The findings are compared to INGO practice both as recounted by interviewees and as recorded in evaluative reports and other agency documentation.

As described in Chap. 4, participation discourse in the development sector highlights the consistent promotion of the participatory approach by INGOs. There is a uniformity of language across agencies in that they all encourage participation in organisational decision-making, work in partnership with local organisations, governments and donors, and are accountable to donors for their promotion of the participatory approach. Organisations use a common terminology of participation, empowerment and partnership in their operating principles, suggesting that there is a role for beneficiaries and partner organisations in organisational decision-making.

INGO documents identify participatory models that are collaborative and cooperative, promote information sharing, and commit to sustainable partnership development (Kanter 1994). Beneficiaries are encouraged by the INGOs to contribute to decision-making consistent with INGO empowerment strategies. According to a Senior Director at **Agency B**,

“The intention here is to fulfil the organisational agenda that is to empower the locals to take up the issues.” This is powerful language as its adoption suggests that INGOs are moving towards the realisation of their long-term objective of community empowerment and ownership. Three INGOs (**Agencies B, E and F**) have detailed participatory models that enable staff to create meaningful relations with partner organisations beyond the learning forums, workshops and other one-off events that characterise beneficiary participation in most organisations.

Partnership frameworks are a practical application of participatory policies and represent a strategic shift in INGO management thinking. Based on a reading of organisational policies, the resultant image is one of inclusion and commitment to furthering partner involvement. When examined using Kanter’s (1994) framework, only one of the three agencies, **Agency F**, took the initiative to draft partnership agreements, signalling through the content of their agreement their desire to build strong, collaborative alliances with their partner organisations. Scholars identify personal relationships and their voluntary nature as criteria for successful partnerships (Kanter 1994; Dichter 1989; Lister 2000; Harrison et al. 2009).

Turning from theory to practice, the research found some variance in both beneficiary and partner participation. Participatory mechanisms of all organisations are, for the most part, sources of one-way information flow, and forums for beneficiary and partner feedback following project implementation. Collectively, INGOs articulate existing roles for beneficiaries in their organisational decision-making policies while admitting that, as organisations, they could improve their participatory approach. Local partner assessments suggest that beneficiaries would like greater information sharing and communication, a stronger role in programme implementation and sustainable commitments from their agency partners.

There is little formal commitment to staff participation reflected in INGO policies and principles, unlike organisational discourse on participation described in Chap. 4 whose emphasis is on the employee’s role in organisational decision-making. Despite the prospects for participation based on the principles behind the participatory approach, a role for INGO staff is not reflected in organisational policy. It suggests that there may be no basis for staff expectations of a participatory role for themselves in organisational decision-making notwithstanding staff perception of organisational ownership and right to participate (Billis and MacKeith 1993; Hodson 1992), as described in Chap. 4, and its contribution to employee motivation.

For the process of participation to be truly effective, it “has to be actively supported by those in power” (Kester 2007: 207), and “the very question of worker decisions is moot if there is not sufficient structure to implement whatever decisions people make” (Dichter 1989: 387; Strauss 2006). The degree of staff participation remains dependent on management at the top level of the INGO hierarchy, often at the most senior levels at Headquarters where power and control over organisational decision-making are consolidated at the pinnacle of the organisation. The lack of INGO decision-making power in the field is a key feature as demonstrated in the following section.

5.4 PATTERNS OF PARTICIPATION

The participation patterns described in Chap. 4 highlight the stakeholder groups that participate in organisational decision-making in INGOs. Staff have greater involvement in organisational decision-making than beneficiaries, despite INGO rhetoric and policy that emphasises beneficiary participation. There is a unidirectional flow of power from the top of the organisation down to the beneficiaries and partner organisations as stakeholder groups external to the organisation. The power and control exerted by management over staff in organisational decision-making within the INGO is replicated downwards in the relationship between staff and beneficiaries. This section analyses the patterns of staff participation in comparison to those of beneficiaries.

Staff participate in organisational decision-making, and management response to their input is described in Chap. 4. The tables provide evidence of employee consultation that, although limited, is consistent with the EU directive referenced in Chap. 4 that employees be provided with an opportunity for input to organisational decision-making and that they can expect a response from management for their efforts.

Partnership development between organisations where normative control denotes a measure of trust in the predictability of actions (Tomlinson 2005) is used as an indicator in an examination of stakeholder relations. In this instance, staff could presume that management exercise normative control in their responses to staff input. Staff expectation of management style and practice reinforces what they perceive as a trust-based relationship (Das and Teng 2001). It is this trust-based relationship, derived from normative control and reflected in shared values, that contributes to staff motivation and commitment.

As demonstrated in Chap. 4, staff contribute on many issues including the strategic planning process. However, strategic planning is more often driven by formal approaches from Headquarters that establish pre-defined limitations on staff participation. While staff contribute to the process at all agencies, management are the authors of the resultant strategic plans. The impact of formal approaches and controls on staff participation, in this instance in the strategic planning process, can weaken opportunities to foster a trust-based relationship (Das and Teng 2001).

There is evidence of a natural “community of speakers” among staff as a stakeholder group who are able to use their “voice” to contribute to organisational decision-making. As employees of an INGO, staff find themselves members of a select group of persons, those who work in the development sector. It is a sector that has its own manner of speaking or “creative jargon” (Bellier 2005: 254) which can act as a barrier to entry by others, rendering it a closed system from which one might expect a common discourse to emerge.

Examining “voice” from another perspective, that is in terms of what Detert and Burris (2007) refer to as risk perception, there are no suggestions from interviewees that staff do not make use of participatory mechanisms due to perceived risk. Staff do not appear to restrict their contributions, perhaps relying on representative bodies such as the organisational Council, staff representatives and the HR department in its liaison role to minimise any risks associated with the provision of input and information sharing. Staff either may not perceive a risk to assuming responsibility or are prepared to participate regardless of risk.

However, the image of staff as risk-takers is countered by a senior manager of an agency external to the research study, “how do you develop a strategic plan with a bunch of people who are comfortable being told what to do; they might say something that can come back to haunt them, and they’re scared of responsibility ... how prepared are these people to be participating, they’re in a really uncomfortable place when I ask them ‘what do you think?’” The comments of this manager suggest that Hofstede et al.’s (2010) culturally determined behaviours of “risk aversion” and “uncertainty avoidance” are ever present.

In summary, staff have expectations of participation based on the rationale that they should enjoy the same rights as beneficiaries to participate in organisational decision-making, and their perceived ownership of the institution (Billis and MacKeith 1993; Hodson 1992). These expectations are strengthened through the availability of participatory mechanisms,

staff perception of management's apparent normative control, staff membership in a "community of speakers" and staff involvement in organisational decision-making based on low risk perception.

On the other hand, the strategic planning process demonstrates how management institutes formal approaches and controls that undermine a trust-based relationship and impact staff motivation. The analysis hints at conflicting realities in management-staff relations as staff expectations of management response to input, its apparent normative control, and developing trust relations are belied by management's formalised approaches and boundary setting. The next section describes management perceptions of stakeholder participation and its contribution to an understanding of power relations among stakeholder groups.

5.5 MANAGEMENT PERCEPTIONS OF PARTICIPATION

Management perceptions of participation by staff, beneficiaries and partner organisations provide important insights into their understanding of stakeholder involvement in organisational decision-making, as outlined in Chap. 4. This section highlights key elements of discourse from each of the agencies that shape stakeholder relations, and seeks to draw conclusions on the wider implications for INGO performance.

At **Agency B**, the author notes the opposing perspectives of the adequacy/inadequacy of participation from within the same organisation as interviewees described their perceptions of the effectiveness of the Council structure. Sharing these narratives to illustrate their perceptions of participation, the interviewees created closer alignment between themselves and the author.

The partnership approach adopted by this agency suggests a more inclusive, collective employment model. Although this approach implies closer relations between external stakeholder groups and the agency, the move is not based on equality but rather out of necessity, to satisfy donors and to improve the functioning of the organisation. Partner selection is a "very extensive consultative process" according to a Front-Line Manager, who also notes that the adoption of a partnership approach requires a significant internal shift from an emphasis on project management to stakeholder management and relationship building.

The Council structure in this agency is considered to be a consultative staff forum that directly contributes to management decision-making; management however remains the ultimate decision-maker in a traditional

employer-employee relationship. While the Council is a representative body, with responsibility for relaying staff input to senior management, it does not hold the decision-making power that it had in the past. Regardless, all interviewees acknowledge that it is the consultative nature of relations between management and staff that defines and shapes stakeholder interactions, and that it would be a different agency in the absence of the Council structure. The presence of the Council is viewed as a mediating force.

Agency C's reliance on partner organisations for implementation is problematic for one Front-Line Manager who uses personal narrative to explain their perspective on participation. In the context of their own workload, this manager finds it difficult to convey to senior management that direct supervision of multiple partners is challenging. As described by the Front-Line Manager,

There is a lot going on and one person cannot do all that, and I had to give evidence of the things that are needed that sometimes is not possible to do all of them at the same time ... you're working with three partners so it is possible, it's just a matter of giving the partners guidance and giving them more responsibilities and you will be like a supervisory role. But it's not enough, for me I don't think it is enough, you have to be there.

The obvious frustration of the Front-Line Manager is reflected in the expressed challenges to implementation of a participatory approach and the lack of senior management recognition of their claims. In contrast, the Country Director acknowledges the need to prioritise staff claims,

when I try to set strategy, people make it absolutely clear that you can't just shove things down our throats. We have got to feel that we are part of this thinking so the conversation usually now is, yes, we may well not take on all your ideas but we will certainly make sure they are central to debate and discussions that lead to the final outcomes.

At **Agency D**, interviewees describe a participatory process that highlights direct community involvement in agency-led dialogue, side-lining to some extent their partner organisations. There is no evidence of attempts by the agency to formalise its relationship with partner organisations. There are contrasting interpretations of staff participation by interviewees. According to the HR Manager, staff participation is agency-led within pre-determined boundaries, while the Country Director describes

an informal environment, characterised by an “open-door” policy. While these are not mutually exclusive realities, it highlights the differing priorities and interpretations of individual managers.

Agency E recognises the need to be more participatory given that, at present, their requests for beneficiary input are made when the design process is completed. The agency is trying to alter the process in terms of the length of time it allocates to gathering input. Agency documentation describes an organisation active in hosting an annual meeting with beneficiaries and community representatives from which an action plan to implement input is drafted. However, in terms of staff ability to develop meaningful beneficiary relations, current staff skills are flagged as limiting. Furthermore, while opportunities are available for staff involvement at staff meetings, and through the HR department in its liaison role, there is evidence of a definitive hierarchical structure and that decision-making is led from the top, despite perceptions among management that the process is “very consultative”.

Agency F promotes individual staff problem solving, a contributory process from the field that finds more field managers participate in the SMT meetings than senior managers at the country office in Nairobi. Overall, staff participation in organisational decision-making is characterised as “consultative”, although it is recognised that senior management makes final decisions. A recent structural change that saw devolution of responsibility from the head of agency to head of operations in order to streamline reporting lines was driven by staff input and contributed to the perception of SMT that “staff are content”.

Furthermore, the agency limits the impact of hierarchical structure with the introduction of lateral decision-making processes and involvement of staff from the field, for example, by holding SMT meetings rotationally in different field offices. Puzzling over issues of participation, input and voice, trying new structures, testing and seeking feedback through different communication routes, characterises this agency’s efforts that, while not perfect, represent a sustained attempt at shared decision-making process. With respect to beneficiary participation in organisational decision-making, this agency has prioritised partnership development with partner organisations, described earlier in this chapter, as a means of strengthening its communication with local communities.

At **Agency G**, there is limited effort by the agency to create formal mechanisms for beneficiary input. As quoted in Chap. 4, the Assistant Country Director explains that a more formal participatory process would

have negative repercussions, as those community members in positions of power would easily control the process. Beneficiary participation remains ad hoc with some attempt at systemisation. The narrative draws the author into the issue of power relations that exist in beneficiary communities and creates an alignment and common understanding based on the author's experience working with communities in the same geographic region. There are contrasting messages regarding staff participation. There is a formal system of staff representation for consultation with senior management. Elected staff representatives in each field office are responsible for bringing concerns to management and sharing feedback with staff. However, general staff meetings as a forum for information sharing are held on an irregular basis.

The analysis of sampled INGO discourse in this section provides a detailed examination of beneficiary and staff participation based on management perceptions of participation. The discourse confirms that beneficiary participation is often irregular, is normally at the behest of the respective agencies and serves primarily as a means of one-way information sharing, with few exceptions. Staff participation is characterised as consultative and limited to a contributory role. "Participation is an extractive information process rather than a participatory process", according to a former senior manager from an external agency. As final decision-making remains in management's control, staff participation is characterised as a consultative, management-led, direct approach to participation (Wilkinson et al. 2010; Coats 2004), as described in Chap. 4. Beneficiary participation is characterised as staff-dependent, infrequent and unidirectional.

In part, it is the presence of stakeholder attributes (Mitchell et al. 1997), affirming staff as "definitive stakeholders" that prioritises their input and interests over those of beneficiaries.

Sharek et al. (2010) suggest that the attention afforded by management to stakeholder input is a measure of its importance to the organisation as well as its feasibility of implementation. As illustrated in Chap. 4, management directed staff input away from major management issues of primary importance to the organisation because decisions on these issues had been taken elsewhere, thereby negating management's need to evaluate staff input by its feasibility of implementation.

An unexpected finding identifies limitations in staff skill as partially responsible for minimal progress in realising long-term INGO objectives. Two of the six agencies (**Agencies B** and **E**) acknowledge the need to develop new skill sets for staff tasked with developing partner relations. Of these two agencies, the Assistant Country Director at **Agency E** went so

far as to link the limited engagement with beneficiaries and communities to a lack of staff skill. It is significant that INGOs' long-term objective to empower communities to assume control and ownership over resource allocation is challenged by an absence of sufficient skill among staff as key stakeholders and interlocutors responsible for managing this process. While data collected on human resource training and development practices in INGOs is not included in this study, anecdotally and from documents provided by the agencies themselves, it is evident that communication and leadership skills are not included in the training requests and programmes offered by INGOs to their staff. Mintzberg's (1975) description of the wide-range of managerial skills required of an effective manager suggests that in an INGO setting, the ability to manage consultation with and participation of multiple stakeholders is paramount.

In summary, Mitchell et al.'s (1997) measure of the priority of stakeholder claims, highlights the greater number of staff attributes in comparison to those of beneficiaries. The interdependencies and potential tensions between the stakeholder groups are reinforced by management perceptions described in this section. As internal stakeholders, staff hold greater power in their control of resource distribution to beneficiaries, and in claims for management attention. However, a lack of staff skill and ability to manage stakeholder relations is identified by management and has potential to derail INGO attempts to foster community empowerment objectives. Compounding existing tension between staff and management due to hierarchical structures, staff are marginalised by management practice that limits their participation on major management issues such as budgets and organisational growth. Purcell et al.'s (2003) model in the next section identifies potential impacts of HRM practice on organisational performance.

5.6 UNDERSTANDING THE PURCELL ET AL. (2003) MODEL IN THE INGO CONTEXT

At the institutional level, Purcell et al.'s (2003) model of HR and performance provides a framework for analysis where ability (A), motivation (M) and opportunity (O) combine to favourably impact organisational performance.

From the 11 HR practices identified in the Purcell et al. (2003) model, the research focuses in two distinct areas: firstly, on recruitment and selection which contributes to staff skill and ability (A), and secondly, involvement in organisational decision-making which is part of opportunity to

participate (O). My interpretation and application of the Purcell et al. (2003) model suggests that the ability (A) of potential employees is measured during the recruitment and selection process. Patterns of participation provide insight into stakeholder involvement and opportunity (O) to participate in organisational decision-making. Management perceptions of participation provide evidence of management power and control over decision-making. Both the details of HRM policies and practices described earlier and management perception of organisational performance provide insight into the potential impacts of HRM policies and practices of INGOs on organisational performance.

5.6.1 Understanding of Human Resource Management Practices

The research findings and analysis of INGO HR management policies and practices contribute to an understanding of the HRM-performance relationship framed by the Purcell et al. (2003) model. Table 5.1 identifies the implications of INGO HRM policies and practices for the organisations.

Table 5.1 highlights the contradictions in INGO HRM policies and practices. An examination of the first element, Ability, highlights benefits arising from recruitment strategies that are offset by omissions in selection practices. While INGOs aim to attract a wider candidate audience by adopting open search methods, and by demonstrating a higher management capacity, their inability to compete on compensation leaves them with less strength in the labour market to attract skilled candidates. While INGOs aim for consistency of candidate selection through the use of a standardised application process, the choice of selection methods and an employment security that either matches or exceeds similar practices among UK-based organisations (CIPD 2009), their intentions are undermined by the lack of training for interview panel members and absence of an interview procedures training manual. Their position is further weakened by the introduction of subjectivity and potential for favouritism that challenges the transparency of the recruitment and selection process itself. This is seen in the organisational failure to consistently appoint the highest scoring candidate, a practice that could improve the predictive value of the interview (McCourt and Eldridge 2003). This practice does not mitigate the identified risks of nepotism and favouritism.

With respect to the second element, Opportunity to Participate, there is greater staff involvement in practice than that of beneficiaries, contrary

Table 5.1 Implications of existing HRM policies and practices

| <i>Model</i> | <i>HRM policies</i> | <i>HRM practices</i> | <i>Implications</i> |
|--------------|---------------------------|---|--|
| Ability | Recruitment strategies | Open search methods | Attract wider audience |
| | | Higher management capacity | Balanced resource use in targeting heterogeneous market |
| | Selection procedures | Lower labour market power | Inability to compete on compensation |
| | | Standardised application process | Ensures consistency at early stage of hiring process |
| Opportunity | Involvement communication | No user manual nor training for panel members | Reduces consistency in preparation for and during interview |
| | | Failure to appoint highest scoring candidate | Subjective assessment of fit reduces transparency |
| | | Internal promotion | Provides employment security |
| | | No policy commitment to staff communication with one exception | Reduces staff expectations of participation |
| | | Opportunities to participate | Greater staff participation than beneficiary but not on major issues |
| | | One agency demonstrates its desire to develop partnerships based on mutuality and trust, to develop collaborative alliances | Question whether real change in organisational culture |

Source: Author compilation based on research findings

to stated HRM policies and principles that, with one exception, omit references to staff communication and involvement in organisational decision-making. Staff opportunities to participate are significant for their positive impact on organisational performance. However, staff involvement is confined to lesser issues rather than major management issues such as budget cuts and organisational growth, thereby potentially undermining benefits derived from greater involvement itself. From the perspective of beneficiaries and partner organisations, while each of the agencies demonstrates a

majority of good partnership criteria (Kanter 1994), only **Agency F** clearly signals potential for strong collaborative alliances. Thus, the ability of the majority of INGOs to achieve their long-term objective to empower local communities and foster community ownership of resources and change processes, appears compromised in the absence of opportunities for real partnership, grounded in mutuality and trust.

The analysis suggests that the HRM practices of INGOs in Kenya, specifically those related to Ability in the Purcell et al. (2003) model, are for the most part consistent with those of UK-based organisations. Although the reference point in the study is new employees, the process of identification, selection and hiring of new staff also indirectly impacts current staff. The benefits of standardised recruitment and selection processes signal to staff that transparent policies are applied equally without discrimination, and that current staff can expect the same treatment as external hires. With respect to Opportunity in the Purcell et al. (2003) model, there is greater staff involvement in organisational decision-making than beneficiary participation. The limited roles for beneficiaries and partner organisations in organisational decision-making, and little demonstration of partnership, challenge the realisation of long-term INGO objectives of community empowerment.

Strategic Human Resource Management

Staff are a key stakeholder group and an important asset to the organisation, without which NPOs cannot function. Staff are, in fact, in their representational role on behalf of the INGOs, the nexus of relationships between donors who provide organisational funding, and the communities where projects are implemented. In such an important role, employment security, as reflected in internal promotions, contributes directly to their motivation and performance.

SHRM has been recognised as important for its longer-term approach to building an organisational relationship between staff management policies and practices and organisational performance. “The pattern of planned human resource deployments and activities intended to enable an organisation to achieve its goals” recognises both the linkage between HRM practices and organisational strategy, and the relationship between HRM practices and employee outcomes (Wright and McMahan 1992: 298).

Beyond guiding staff behaviours, the linking of HR practice and strategy facilitates management planning and directs resource allocation to programme needs and objectives in the non-profit sector (Akingbola 2015).

This is a practical necessity for INGOs that can frequently be overlooked. Instead, HR management are often required to fill vacancies for projects and programmes that they know nothing about. The benefits of a strategic alignment between HR practices and organisational strategy could prove useful for INGOs in the strategic management of their human resources.

While the HR literature highlights the performance advantages of SHRM in the for-profit sector, critics argue that human resources are not a homogenous collection of individuals who can be corralled together (Nkomo and Ensley 1999; Kaye 1999; Bagdadli et al. 2012) nor for whom a singular, unifying approach is appropriate. Evidence from non-profit sectors in North America and the UK finds that organisations have not generally adopted a strategic approach to HRM due to a variety of internal and external factors that limits its implementation. These factors include funding constraints, failed attempts to match HRM policies and practices to organisational mission and vision, the existence of a formalised HR department and the value-orientation of the non-profit sector itself (Moore 2003; Cunningham 2010; Ridder and McCandless 2010; Guo et al. 2011; Akingbola 2006). For INGOs, strategic alignment appears as a practical necessity that at its root recognises the people on whom it is dependent.

5.6.2 *Interpretation of Organisational Performance*

While the INGOs profess an inclusive, participatory approach in their policies and principles, it is not widely evident in practice, for either beneficiaries or staff. Stakeholder groups are mainly situated in prescribed roles according to a traditional Western management hierarchical model that is unchanged since INGOs were identified as post-war vehicles for aid distribution. Roles are assigned within a top-down structure that leaves little or no room for innovation. This may be a product of a central control style of management practice and also a relatively high level of “risk aversion” (Hofstede et al. 2010) to initiatives and innovation by staff in country offices. Within this context, management provide their perceptions of organisational performance.

The author has depended on management discourse as a “trust-based” account (Tomlinson 2005) to understand perceived organisational performance. This is an acceptable proxy measure for an organisation where there is no financial bottom line (Kristof 1996; Delaney and Huselid 1996; Yousef 2003). In terms of the longer-term objective of INGOs

to achieve sustainable development through community empowerment, the research findings, as described in Chap. 4, highlight a contradiction between organisational principles and policies, and actual practice that limits the ability of the organisation to realise its longer-term objective.

At the onset of the study, the measurement of organisational performance was described in terms of the ability of the organisation to achieve its stated objectives. Of particular interest is a measure of organisational accountability to its stakeholders, the prioritisation of the “institutional imperative” (Edwards 1999), which proposes that organisations consciously choose a path of upward accountability towards donor priorities over the needs of beneficiaries, despite stated organisational objectives to strengthen longer-term commitments to beneficiaries and to promote local ownership of resources through capacity building programmes. In attempting to measure the extent to which INGOs achieve these objectives, interviewees commented on their own perceptions of organisational performance.

The majority of interviewees describe their organisation’s performance in terms of the achievement of community empowerment, and specifically identify the consultation process, itself a tool for promoting stakeholder voice, as a measure of their success. Only two organisations (**Agencies E** and **G**) refer to programming results as a measure of performance. For **Agency E**, an understanding of community needs and an ability to develop local capacity through mentoring programmes are the determinants of its achievements of cost-effective performance and programme growth in multiple areas across the organisation. According to the Assistant Country Director,

the model was to create multiple programmes in the same locality ... (this) gives you cost effectiveness, you are able to meet the different needs of the same communities and you then grow and understand how the different programmes feed into each other. (**Agency E**)

At **Agency G**, effective annual planning initiated at the national team level in each area is responsible for creating an annual action plan that contributes to its programme results. **Agency D** states that in their opinion, they are good at what they do. None of the organisations provide a quantitative measure of performance.

The lack of achievement of community empowerment is perhaps not surprising according to a representative of a large, international

philanthropic foundation, “you cannot build capacity of others when you don’t believe in others having capacity”. This perspective from a representative of civil society in Kenya is telling, as it suggests that the realisation of the community empowerment objective through the capacity development of local institutions and partner organisations is more a theoretical construct than a reality.

In two of the organisations (**Agencies E** and **F**) that characterise their consultation process as “very good”, there are critical elements within interviewee discourse that challenge the classification of “very good”. Specifically, at **Agency E** the statement that “(the CD) tells us what decisions have been made” confirms decision-making at the senior management level, suggesting little input from other members of the SMT or staff. At **Agency F**, different perceptions of effectiveness of Area Managers in relaying information from beneficiaries and staff to Nairobi suggest a lack of communication between the Nairobi office and their field offices throughout Kenya.

The apparent confusion within the organisational hierarchy is evident in the concurrent acknowledgement of the INGO’s effective consultation process while at another level expressing concern over a perceived lack of communication. It is in fact top management, members of the SMT, at both agencies who voice concerns over effective communication processes with staff, beneficiaries and partner organisations, while lower cadre management favourably acknowledge the consultation process. Given the lack of common understanding among senior and front-line management at these agencies, the ability of these agencies to realise their objectives is questionable given that, as Marchington (2001) notes, successful implementation and realisation of objectives is dependent upon leadership of front-line management to encourage staff commitment and motivation.

While it could be expected in most organisations that there is an inconsistency of opinion and perception of organisational performance among management at various levels of the organisational hierarchy, this is not the first evidence of contradictions within INGO management processes. As I identify in an examination of the recruitment and selection process in earlier chapters, the mixture of objective and subjective decision-making by panellists brings into question the transparency of the recruitment and selection process. The practice generates conflicting signals of management intent for staff from the SMT.

According to management discourse, management perceive that staff are satisfied with their involvement in organisational decision-making where involvement is limited to information sharing and consultation. Management construct this reality within existing organisational boundaries. Moreover, management discourse highlights variances in interpretation based on their own definition of effective communication. Senior management draws on Western HR management theory to encourage stakeholder involvement in decision-making as part of a participatory approach, while front-line management measures communication by the availability of opportunities to be consulted on the issues. That these two measures are dissimilar highlights the variances in priorities of staff and management, as stakeholder groups within the INGO, that emerge at the heart of this study.

5.7 CONCLUSION

The purpose of this chapter is to consider the findings of the empirical research presented in earlier chapters. This is accomplished through an analysis of research findings of selected and representative HRM policies and practices, specifically, recruitment and selection, and stakeholder involvement in organisational decision-making. This analysis contributes to an understanding of the relationship between HRM policies and practices, and organisational performance in INGOs in Kenya.

At all agencies, management capacity to recruit is limited to some degree by agency vulnerability in the labour market. Survey data from UK-based organisations (CIPD 2009) provides practical comparisons to INGO recruitment and selection processes, with mixed results, as INGOs in some areas perform better than the UK while other areas less so. Possible limitations of selection processes relate to lack of user manual, limited use of selection methods and lack of panellist preparation. In a comparison of INGO practice to Western management theory, there are negative implications for INGOs that practice subjectivity in the identification of skilled candidates to fill positions within their organisations, both in terms of undermining the transparency of the process and increased homogeneity of the workforce.

A review of organisational policies and principles finds that there is uniformity of language across agencies, suggesting a role for both beneficiaries and partner organisations, as identified in Chap. 4, in organisational decision-making that signals a shift in management thinking. However,

in practice only three of six agencies (**Agencies B, E and F**) have specific partnership policies and agreements that formalise relations between INGOs and partner organisations. An examination of partnership documentation using Kanter's (1994) framework finds that only the agreement of **Agency F** signals an intention to develop strong, collaborative alliances based on mutuality and trust. Although staff have expectations of a role in organisational decision-making (Billis and MacKeith 1993; Hodson 1992), control remains at the top of the organisation.

In the comparison between INGO theory and practice, the study finds that INGO policies and principles of participation, empowerment and partnership have limited applicability for beneficiaries in practice. In contrast, and perhaps paradoxically, although there is an absence of stated policies encouraging staff participation, it emerges that INGO staff are allocated more significant roles and opportunities to participate in organisational decision-making. That this is contrary to the initial assumptions of the study is a significant finding.

Although pre-determined boundaries control stakeholder involvement, staff participation in organisational decision-making is greater than that of other stakeholder groups. As management provides mechanisms to facilitate participation and response to input, the predictability of their actions could lead staff to presume more normative than formal control over the process, accompanied by a presumption of trust. That staff are members of a "community of speakers" (Bellier 2005) reinforces the perception of a trust-based relationship (Tomlinson 2005; Das and Teng 2001). Furthermore, their use of representative bodies such as the Council structure, staff representatives and HR Managers in a liaison role suggests that they have reduced the risk of information sharing (Detert and Burris 2007).

An examination of management perceptions of available participation methods for use by both staff and beneficiaries highlights the power relations among and between stakeholder groups. INGO senior management controls the scope and range of staff participation in organisational decision-making, while staff perform a similar controlling function for beneficiary participation. It appears that these stakeholder relations reinforce the limitations on participation, thereby restricting beneficiary participation to information sharing and staff participation to information sharing and consultation. Further evidence from beneficiary surveys and evaluations suggests that beneficiary expectation is for greater participation but, in the absence of an opportunity to interview beneficiaries directly, I am unable to confirm their expectations.

In a developing country such as Kenya, it is perhaps appropriate, particularly in the context of Mendonca and Kanungo's (1994) research that it can be sufficient that staff perceive that they have opportunities to participate in organisational decision-making to positively impact on organisational performance. An unexpected finding is a lack of staff skills in stakeholder management and communication. This has potential to derail the realisation of community empowerment, given staff's role as interlocutor between internal and external stakeholder groups.

Finally, the study returns to Purcell et al.'s (2003) model of the relationship between HRM and performance to provide context to the study's findings and analysis. Of the 11 HRM policies identified in the model, the study focuses on recruitment and selection, and stakeholder involvement in organisational decision-making. An examination of the implications presented in Table 5.1 suggests that INGO HRM policy and principles present conflicting and contradictory messages in their implementation to management and staff as internal stakeholders, and beneficiaries and partners as external stakeholders. Furthermore, the majority of INGOs do not have opportunities for real partnership, as they have either not initiated formalised approaches or their approaches do not reflect the characteristics of "mutuality and trust" (Kanter 1994). The lack of staff skills in stakeholder management and communication serve to undermine their ability to develop "strong interpersonal relations", an indicator itself of successful partnerships (Dichter 1989; Kanter 1994; Lister 2000). Failure to recognise the lack of skill and communication shortfalls reduces organisational ability to achieve its long-term objectives.

While agencies consider their consultation process to be good, it is challenged by a lack of communication between stakeholder groups internal and external to the organisation, and evidence of top-down decision-making. However, it is interesting to note that at those agencies whose discourse includes specific reference to the term, consultation, it is senior level management that raise concerns over process while lower level management appear satisfied with the process. Thus, in the context of organisational culture versus national culture, where Western expectations of practice meet Kenyan realities, organisations would be well placed to reflect on Jackson's (2009) caution described in Chap. 1 and examine applications of cross-cultural integration.

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What Have We Learned?

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The chapter summarises agency practice of recruitment and selection processes, contextualising the findings in terms of the prioritisation of the HR function by the agencies. A comparison between INGO principles and policies, and the practice of participation, highlights organisational challenges and the impact of management perceptions on the implementation of participatory approaches. Framed by stakeholder theory, the concluding thoughts describe parallel organisational shifts that impact the HRM-performance relationship.

The purpose of the study was to explore the relationship between HRM practices and performance of INGOs in Kenya. This was achieved through an examination of the relationship between HRM and organisational performance using a multiple case study format comprising six INGOs operating in Kenya. A comparative analysis of Western HR management theory, and industry experience primarily in the UK, with select INGO HRM practices, contributes to greater understanding of the impact of HRM practices on organisational performance. The study examined INGO HR management process to develop an understanding of how these organisations function as they do.

This chapter draws together the findings, analysis and discussion of previous chapters to present concluding thoughts. Framed by stakeholder theory, the concluding thoughts describe parallel organisational shifts that

impact the HRM-performance relationship. The first section summarises agency practice of recruitment and selection processes, contextualising the findings in terms of the prioritisation of the HR function by the agencies. The next section presents a comparison between INGO principles and policies and practice of participation, highlighting organisational challenges and the impact of management perceptions on the implementation of participatory approaches. Building on these summaries, these findings are contextualised using stakeholder theory and analysis to present the underlying structural and procedural shifts that impact organisational performance. The empirical findings generated by the study contribute to knowledge of specific HRM policies and practices in INGOs in Kenya. Research limitations are identified alongside mitigation measures adopted by the author. Finally, topics for future research are proposed that would further contribute to knowledge of INGO HR management process.

6.2 ASSESSMENT OF HRM POLICIES AND PRACTICES

This section summarises the author's interpretation of INGO HRM practices based on research findings and analysis. In combination, recruitment and selection process provides a measure of the priority of the HR function for the organisations. Recruitment and selection process is compared to Western HR management theory and industry data.

6.2.1 *Comparison of Process to Theory*

The Purcell et al. (2003) model linking HRM and organisational performance provides the foundational HR management theory for the study. Given the organisational convergence between transnational corporations and INGOs described in Chap. 1, Western HR management theory is chosen for purposes of comparison to INGO practice, and along with industry data facilitates an examination of recruitment and selection process of INGOs. The examination of select HRM policies and practices fills an existing gap in knowledge.

Boxall and Purcell's (2008) evaluation model has been used to gauge the impact of management process on the development of recruitment strategies through measures of management capacity and power to recruit in the labour market. The findings of the analysis classify INGOs as "flexible" structures with greater capacity than their competitors. A study of UK-based organisations (CIPD 2009) provides useful comparative data

on selection practices. Research findings suggest that INGO selection practices are generally similar to those of UK-based organisations. For example, the use of structured interviews and tests of specific skills are for the most part closely comparable while approaches to internal promotions are less so.

These findings are not exceptional and suggest that INGOs reconsider standardisation of processes to ensure consistency and transparency of management process, particularly to internal stakeholders for whom the risk of favouritism and nepotism and an increasingly homogenised workforce are greater in the absence of standardised processes. The potential impacts on organisational performance of inaction are significant for, without appropriately skilled staff, organisational performance could be compromised. The current recruitment and selection process has failed to identify staff with the appropriate skills and abilities to effectively promote partnership approaches, thereby undermining the realisation of INGO objectives of community empowerment.

6.3 EVIDENCE OF STAFF PARTICIPATION

This section summarises the findings from a comparison of participation theory in the development sector with INGO practice and highlights the challenges faced by INGOs in the implementation of a participatory approach as well as the existing contradictions between theory and practice. A comparison of staff and beneficiary participation illustrating the patterns of participation and management perceptions of participation provides insight into stakeholder control over organisational decision-making.

6.3.1 *Comparison of Participation Theory and Practice*

The term participation was acknowledged as good development practice among donors (Narayan et al. 2000), whose agendas embraced the longer-term objective of community empowerment. As such the participatory approach was integrated into INGO policies and principles for its contribution to the achievement of sustainable development goals.

In an attempt to operationalise the participatory approach enshrined in agency principles, three of the participant agencies introduced specific partnership policies and framework agreements in late 2010. The formalisation of partner relationships reflects a shift in management thinking at these agencies towards longer-term commitments to communities and

partner organisations and embraces the development theory that such commitments would strengthen local capacity and promote community ownership of resources.

However, an evaluation of the policies and framework agreements finds that while each of the agencies demonstrates a majority of the good partnership criteria (Kanter 1994) in their partnership policies and agreements, it is only **Agency F** whose partnership policy and accompanying agreements reflect “trust, equality and mutual commitment”, where there is an opportunity for “building personal relations”, that most clearly signals the potential to build strong collaborative alliances between INGOs and their partner organisations.

In addition, the practicalities of donor fund transfers, the operations of side project-orientation and the preference by donors for short-term, easily measurable projects, as described in Chap. 4 are further obstacles that demonstrate a degree of external stakeholder control that is not compatible with the longer-term commitments required to build solid relationships between INGOs and local communities. Thus, obstacles are erected both by INGOs and donors that limit the implementation of a participatory approach. Nonetheless, the attempts by INGOs to build meaningful partnerships are in the early stages and there are opportunities to revise and amend the policies and framework agreements in their draft stage. However, the donor community must operate as a collective entity and alter its short-term distributive mechanisms to ensure that agencies receive longer-term funding to support local institutional development if the longer-term objective of community empowerment is to be realised.

6.3.2 Effect of Management Perceptions on Salience of Stakeholder Claims

According to INGO management as interviewees, management perceives that beneficiaries and partner organisations have opportunities to participate in organisational decision-making. Secondary data from evaluations and surveys among beneficiaries and partner organisations provide contrary evidence including requests for greater information sharing and communication and stronger roles in programme implementation. The fact that these requests have been submitted to management, and articulated in evaluations and surveys, suggests that indeed there have been “opportunities” to participate that generate an expectation that the contribution will be recognised and acted upon. However, with respect to

beneficiary participation, evidence demonstrates repeatedly that management response to beneficiary input is limited and that implementation in response to their requests is not guaranteed. **Agency E** is the only organisation to demonstrate follow-up to beneficiary input through its plan of action following such a meeting with beneficiaries and partner organisations.

Staff participation is characterised as consultative by **Agencies B, E** and **F**, although it is a management-led approach with senior management retaining firm control over decision-making. Further examination of the consultative approach at **Agency F** uncovers opposing perspectives as senior management is critical of their own handling of the consultation process, citing a lack of information exchange, while front-line management appears content with opportunities for consultation. That staff have had an opportunity to participate, that their involvement enables them to input to organisational decision-making and that their input, albeit limited, is recognised by management confirm the greater salience of their claims (Mitchell et al. 1997).

Despite the inconsistencies highlighted by the contrast between INGO practice of participation and INGO policies and principles of participation, staff involvement in organisational decision-making indicates potential to positively impact on organisational performance, a result that would remain unrealised in the limited and, in some instances absence of, recognition of staff claims.

The challenges, contradictions and differing perceptions highlighted in the practice of participation suggest that organisational performance is limited by a replication of the top-down hierarchy that reinforces existing stakeholder relations, relations that are characterised by power and control among stakeholder groups both external to and within the INGOs themselves.

6.4 THROUGH A STAKEHOLDER LENS

This section provides additional organisational context to an understanding of participatory approaches in INGOs in Kenya where organisational structure and hierarchy reinforce established relations between stakeholder groups, characterised by power and control, and are responsible for determining organisational priorities, as evidenced in INGO HRM process. There is a notable organisational change that occurs over decades and serves to reinforce existing structures and stakeholder relations. It is

an internal structural shift from traditional hierarchy to a flatter structure and more participatory approach in theory that is not reflected in practice. I propose a second, more procedural shift in HRM theory from adoption of good practice to a strategically integrated approach to HRM.

6.4.1 *A Structural Shift*

There is evidence of a shift from traditional hierarchical structures to the adoption of a participatory approach beginning in the 1980s both in the for-profit sector and in the development sector (World Bank 1991). The structural shift did not, however, widely occur beyond North America in terms of the adoption of an indirect approach to participation. In its absence, there was deference to the existing hierarchical models of control seen, for example, in the continued unitarist approach to HRM in the UK (Coats 2004).

In the development sector, there is a geographic delineation between hierarchical versus participatory approaches that impact the INGOs that are the unit of analysis of this study. With INGO headquarters based in North America or Europe, these organisations impart a home-country effect (Muller-Camen et al. 2001) on their field offices in developing countries, promoting a participatory management approach that is inconsistent with both their hierarchical organisational structure and management style. Thus, the organisational hierarchical structure contrasts with the INGO development discourse, the promotion of a participatory approach and a more lateral management style that would empower staff to assume a greater role in community liaison. The resultant tension between discourse and reality is largely unrecognised and unacknowledged by the organisations in this study, yet it is one that permeates all aspects of organisational functions. In constructing its reality and how it interprets the world, management does not appear to have examined its own organisational structures and processes for inherent contradictions.

From an external perspective, the relationship between the INGO and donors compounds the challenges imposed by the existing structural realities as financial dependence on donor funds for organisational sustainability inextricably ties agencies to donor agendas to adopt a participatory approach. However, therein lies the contradiction between a donor-driven agenda of community empowerment that encourages local participation, and donor-led reporting requirements that move stakeholder relations upwards, away from not only accountability at the local level but also a

meaningful participatory role for staff, beneficiaries and partner organisations as stakeholder groups. Scholars recognise and acknowledge the contradiction as evident in their criticisms of the participatory approach for its institutionalisation of inequalities between stakeholder groups (Kothari 2001; Cooke 2001).

While management may not be oblivious to the control exerted by donors as external stakeholders on the agency itself, they have limited power over the relationship. They do, however, have control over the stakeholder groups below them, particularly those within the INGO as institution. Their perspectives on participation in organisational decision-making mask a reality of missed opportunities and potentially unmet expectations. The study found that management perceptions of beneficiary participation are different from reality and that there is evidence that, in Kenya, the Western model of participatory management is satisfied at the information sharing level only for beneficiaries and on a limited range of issues. Furthermore, while staff themselves benefit from greater information sharing and opportunities to participate through numerous mechanisms, their contribution is also limited and confined to the consultation process.

From the perspective of staff as internal stakeholders, agency adoption of a participatory approach certainly suggests that avenues are available for staff involvement in organisational decision-making, particularly when participation is offered to beneficiaries (Hodson 1992). Evidence from research on organisational management in developing countries demonstrates that “individuals feel empowered when they perceive that they can adequately cope with events, situations or people they confront, and feel powerless when they believe they cannot cope with them” (Mendonca and Kanungo 1994: 192). Perhaps staff are satisfied that participatory mechanisms are available whether they use them or not, thereby contributing to their own empowerment within the organisation. As the study was reliant on management discourse as an information source, it is not possible to gauge staff engagement through a direct line of questioning and this is acknowledged as a limitation of the study. However, as described in Chap. 4, management at **Agencies E** and **F** suggest that staff are satisfied with the participatory opportunities offered to them.

This has emerged as a valuable line of inquiry. As management perceives that staff are satisfied with their opportunities for participation in organisational decision-making through consultation, does this mean that staff expectations have been satisfied in a manner consistent with their own perceptions of organisational ownership and right to participate (Billis and

MacKeith 1993; Hodson 1992)? While the limitations of access to staff curtailed this line of questioning, it serves to highlight that management perceptions are the core determinants of organisational structure as information sharing and the consultation process are deemed sufficient as a participatory approach for beneficiaries and staff, respectively. These perceptions further strengthen management's belief that their approach to participation is sufficient to contribute to the realisation of organisational objectives. How stakeholder relations are impacted by a shift in organisational HRM policy and practice is the subject of the next section.

6.4.2 *Procedural Shift in HRM Practice*

While SHRM has often been given an asset-based interpretation and criticised for its commodification and homogenisation of staff (Nkomo and Ensley 1999), my interpretation suggests an adaptation to reflect organisational context, in this instance, that INGOs assume a more collective and collaborative approach to HRM, one that is more reflective of the core values and beliefs of the organisations as articulated in their principles.

Positioning the HR function at the strategic decision-making level of the organisation and developing strategic HR policies to support the strategic integration of the HR department could signal greater collaboration between, and recognition of, human resources as organisational assets.

As INGOs are facing an increasingly competitive funding environment, and donor pressure to both produce programmatic outcomes and meet empowerment objectives through the adoption of a participatory approach, INGO structures have grown to become more bureaucratized and professionalised. Increased professionalisation of the development sector as well as a shift away from the volunteer nature of INGOs themselves has altered the skill requirements of INGO staff. It is thus reasonable to ask whether the recruitment and selection processes have similarly evolved to attract skilled staff with the abilities to meet these demands. Furthermore, INGOs such as CARE International, Save the Children Alliance and Oxfam Great Britain have traditionally had a strong history of delivering services to the most needy, unencumbered by the profit motive. However, social enterprises like John Snow Inc. are challenging the traditional NPOs for donor funds, and perhaps also for staff. As a representative from one donor agency queried, "who is providing results?" as there is little difference between the achievements of social enterprises and traditional INGOs in the eyes of the donor community.

Study findings demonstrate that despite the presence of the Human Resources Manager on the SMT in four of the six agencies, there is little prioritisation of the HR function or adoption of proven recruitment and selection processes to evaluate potential candidates or to attract skilled candidates with experience in stakeholder management and communication, identified as a current skills gap. The organisational focus on development results rather than institutional development of the INGO provides some rationale for the INGO failure to develop its HR function to reflect changing organisational needs. It also serves to highlight the nature of relations between stakeholder groups and local management's limited control at the country office level over HRM policy and practice. For the most part, HRM processes emanate from INGO Headquarters in the West, and, as a result, the INGO country office often lacks the freedom to tailor HRM policies and practices to the local environment.

These elements of the proposed procedural shift can be viewed from another perspective, that of the stakeholder groups, whether staff or management in the INGO. For new staff recruits, the INGO recruitment and selection processes appear to be fairly consistent in the application of good practice and, in some instances, the quality of selection processes appears to exceed those in the UK. At the same time, existing staff, outside of those in the HR department and interview panellists, may not be aware of the subjective practices of candidate selection in some agencies, and thus hold similar views to that of the new recruits, of organisations that conduct fairly routine, high-quality recruitment and selection processes. On the other hand, management has an active role in candidate selection and is well aware of its subjective hiring practices at the country office level. The introduction of subjectivity challenges organisational transparency, and increases the risks of nepotism and favouritism that can be significant impediments to organisational performance, undermining the gains realised through good practice in other aspects of the recruitment and selection process. Furthermore, as organisations tasked with the disbursement of public funds, INGOs are held to higher account for their actions in all facets of their operations.

In summary, stakeholder theory has proved useful in the definition of stakeholder interests and the identification of power relations among and between stakeholder groups. The purpose of stakeholder analysis in the context of INGO HR management process is to determine whose interests to prioritise in order that the organisation is managed effectively. However, if stakeholders, in this instance staff, do not articulate their

interests, management are not going to meet their expectations. Similarly if management neither recognise staff as a key stakeholder group nor prioritise their interests, any potential for achieving organisational objectives is compromised.

This section suggests that INGO management decision-making is both controlled externally by donors, and internally by the decisions of their own Headquarters. They, in turn, exert control over staff and beneficiaries in their recognition of stakeholder interests and prioritisation of staff and beneficiary claims. Staff in turn exercise control over participation by beneficiaries and partner organisations. What is most interesting is the fuller understanding of management's perspectives which attests that, firstly, opportunities exist for stakeholder groups to participate in organisational decision-making, though staff participation is limited to information sharing and consultation as described in Chap. 4, and, secondly, that the INGO implementation of its participatory approach is consistent with INGO policies and principles. That this does not hold true in practice, as described in the analysis in Chap. 5, highlights the insight that reality is not always as it appears in this context. Management is reliant on its perception of performance as a basis for its decision-making. The impact of a reliance on perception suggests that acting on perceived reality can significantly limit organisational performance and the realisation of organisational goals and objectives when that reality is not shared collectively with others.

6.5 CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

The stated objectives of the study were to examine select HRM policy and practice of INGOs in Kenya, specifically recruitment and selection process and stakeholder involvement in organisational decision-making, and to develop an understanding of the potential impacts of select HRM policy and practice on organisational performance. In realising these objectives, new information is generated about the HRM practices of INGOs, specifically recruitment and selection, and staff involvement in decision-making, based on empirical research undertaken in Nairobi, Kenya, over a five-month period beginning January 2011, in six international NGOs, all well-known and recognised agencies in the development sector.

There are multiple tensions reflected in the organisational shifts described in the previous section. Staff involvement and opportunity to participate in organisational decision-making illustrates these contradictions

as management adopts a participatory approach whose laudable intentions are belied by the retention of a hierarchical structure and a system of formal control over the decision-making process and the resultant decisions. Financial dependence on donor funds further entrenches the contradictions between objective ideals of community empowerment as reflected in organisational policies and principles and implementation methods that require an upward accountability to donors as the funding source. Management perceptions that staff are satisfied with the level of involvement highlights management's controlling position over the consultation process, and how their understanding shapes the implementation of the participatory approach. Furthermore, the professionalisation of organisations in the development sector that looks to hire the "new development professionals" (Dichter 1989) with specific skills and abilities has not been matched by a prioritisation of the HR function as a strategic contributor to organisational objectives. Prioritisation of development results over institutional development has not contributed to either the adoption of innovative HRM or the standardisation of INGO HRM processes. These tensions inform an understanding of how INGOs function as they do. Described in these terms, there is no evidence from management discourse that they are aware of these contradictions.

Herein lies the theoretical contribution of the study. The growing distance between INGOs and beneficiaries and their communities has eroded INGO claims first promoted in the 1980s of comparative advantage based on their local knowledge and cultural sensitivity. The opportunity to identify a source of competitive advantage, a necessity in the new operating environment characterised by financial constraints in the twenty-first century, can possibly be realised through the integration of HRM practices and strategic objectives that would recognise the valuable contribution of its human resources to the realisation of organisational objectives. From a theoretical perspective, it appears that such a move could provide a previously unrecognised means by which INGOs could reposition themselves in the development sector by strategically integrating the HR function with organisational objectives, thereby enhancing organisational performance and strengthening competitive advantage.

Tensions such as those described above can weaken staff confidence in and contribution to the organisation, and ultimately undermine organisational performance. Not only has management failed to recognise stakeholder input fully and potentially eroded stakeholder expectations to the detriment of organisational performance, they have done

so based on their own perceptions rather than an examination of reality. Management's understanding has validated the implementation of a participatory approach that is based on their perception of participation. For some of the INGOs that have begun to formalise their participatory approaches through partnership agreements, the process has exposed the reality that there lacks a collective position among management. In terms of INGO HR management process and stakeholder relations, it is not possible for organisations to achieve their organisational goals and objectives when the senior management of these organisations limit stakeholder input and demonstrate preference for some stakeholder groups over others. As noted by Pfeffer (2012), it should be a priority for management to recognise stakeholders over shareholders, in this instance, staff and beneficiaries over donors, if INGOs hope to improve organisational performance.

6.6 RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

The research study has three readily identifiable limitations: a presumption of homogeneity among staff and beneficiaries as individual stakeholder groups, lack of disaggregation of data by gender and other significant groups and lack of direct access to staff and beneficiaries.

What is noticeable in the comparison of management participation discourse is the presumption of homogeneity among and between the stakeholders. As has been noted earlier, beneficiaries are not a unified group that is consistent in its manners and composition, and neither are staff employed by the INGOs. One has only to look at the composition of the population of Kenya: over 40 million persons comprising four major ethnic groups across 42 tribes (Amin et al. 1989) to recognise the diversity of the term beneficiaries. Similarly, there is no stereotypical aid worker, often mistakenly denoted as a white Western male working on the front lines of an emergency; yet the reality could not be farther from the truth and fails to account for multiple ethnicities or for the range of positions in the development sector including volunteer, manager, consultant or technical advisor (Hindman and Fechter 2011). There is also no discernable gender analysis in the INGO literature (Fowler 1997; Igoe 2003; Lewis 2007; Suzuki 1998; Uphoff 1996).

The presumption of homogeneity among beneficiaries and lack of gender disaggregation of data can both be considered as shortcomings in the current study. However, there is a consistency across beneficiary input received by participant agencies that suggests that the message is the

same—beneficiaries would like greater information sharing and an ability to contribute significantly to the planning and development of projects and programmes in their own communities, thus accounting for the author's acceptance of the presumption of beneficiary homogeneity in the study. Furthermore, this is consistent with the premise that this is a study of INGO management process and of the key stakeholder groups that define the process rather than a more directed piece of research focused only on the characteristics of the individual stakeholders themselves.

It is a further limitation of the study that the author was not able to interview staff and beneficiaries directly. This was primarily due to the regional drought crisis in the Horn of Africa in 2011 that directed INGO attention elsewhere. Access to secondary data provided by the agencies enabled the author to gather insights into the actions of staff and beneficiaries.

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ANNEX A1: RESPONSIBILITIES OF NGO COORDINATION BOARD

The NGO Coordination Board as a function of the Act has responsibility to:

- “Register, coordinate and facilitate the work of national and international NGOs operating in Kenya
- Maintain a register of national and international NGOs operating in Kenya, with their precise sectors, affiliations and location of their activities
- Receive, analyse and evaluate the annual reports of NGOs
- Advise the Government on the activities of NGOs and their role in development within Kenya
- Conduct a regular review of the register and to determine its consistency with the reports submitted by NGOs and the NGOs Council
- Provide policy guidelines for NGOs for harmonising their activities with the National Development Plan so that NGOs avoid activities which contradict State development programmes
- Receive, discuss and approve the regular reports of the NGOs Council and to provide strategies for efficient planning and coordination of activities for NGOs in Kenya
- Develop and publish a code of conduct for the regulation of NGOs and their activities in Kenya” (NGO Coordination Board: undated).

ANNEX A2: LITERATURE REVIEW—SELECT PAPERS

| <i>Researchers</i> | <i>Methodology</i> | <i>Outcome</i> |
|----------------------------|--|--|
| Huselid (1995) | Data from 968 US-based firms on organisational HR practices and strategies and firm-level performance to test the assertion that High Performance Work Practices will be reflected in better performance | Findings show that investment in HR practices associated with lower turnover, higher productivity and improved performance |
| MacDuffie (1995) | Survey of 62 automotive assembly plants to assess whether innovative HR practices in a bundling system affect performance | Innovative HRM in bundled system affects performance |
| Delaney and Huselid (1996) | Sampling from 590 for-profit and non-profit firms from the National Organisations Survey to measure firm-level impact of progressive HRM practices | Findings of positive associations between HRM practices and perceptual firm performance measures |
| Becker et al. (2001) | | Recognise HR as strategic system to maximise competitive advantage (p. 3). Study found that “most effective HR management systems exhibited dramatically higher performance” (p. 18) |

| <i>Researchers</i> | <i>Methodology</i> | <i>Outcome</i> |
|-----------------------|--|---|
| Purcell et al. (2003) | Study of 12 UK-based organisations using detailed questionnaires and face-to-face interviews assessed the effectiveness of HR policies with performance measures | Argument that “those organisations that are value-led and managed are more able to sustain their performance over the longer term” (p. 62). In the end it is the “good people management” skills that were found to be responsible for sustaining performance |

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ANNEX A3: RESEARCH METHODS

CONCEPT

This study is a descriptive, exploratory multicase study of the relationship between HRM and organisational performance in INGOs in Kenya. The theoretical framework of the research study is based on a process of “co-created understandings” (Denzin and Lincoln 2008: 32) in collaboration with research participants, in this instance, organisational management and staff members, to develop an understanding of a socially constructed reality (Blaikie 2000) of INGO management process.

The management and staff within each of the participant INGOs have individual perceptions of management processes, ways of knowing and a language that define both how they view themselves and their organisation. In the use of a constructivist approach, it is the role of the researcher to record their thoughts and perceptions and to uncover the meanings behind their words with them so that the collaborative approach produces an organisational reality created from a merger of their knowledge gathered from their response to the research questions and of researcher interpretation.

Organisations are normally composed of multiple stakeholder groups who hold varying degrees of power within the workplace (Mitchell et al. 1997). Evidence shows that those individuals identified within the ranks of management or staff that can link the separate stakeholder groups have everything to gain in terms of power and influence in the organisation (Chao and Moon 2005). In the development sector, the relationships

between stakeholder groups highlight both the tensions and the mutual dependencies between each stakeholder group, as each seeks to retain its power and control over the other. Perceptions of reality are coloured by power relations between stakeholder groups within organisations, and it is these “power relations and interdependencies” (Mowles et al. 2008) among the stakeholder groups that are of most interest.

POSITION OF THE RESEARCHER

The author brings to the study a personal knowledge of the development sector and the INGOs that operate in it, as well as the personalities employed by these agencies developed through years of experience as a project/programme evaluator, trainer and manager in East Africa. Thus, the author’s experience contributes an interpretive role in shaping an understanding of the research findings. This contribution enhances the research findings providing further depth and richness to the process in contrast to the role of someone undertaking similar research without the complementary experience.

To counter the identified risks associated with insider research, staff feedback was repeatedly sought through requests to provide explanatory detail to accompany and explicate further their responses. The benefits of this practice enables the author as interviewer and the interviewee to engage in more meaningful exchange based on shared understandings of development context and practice, thereby reinforcing the appropriateness of the chosen collaborative approach. Therefore, the author is positioned as neither a bystander nor an insider, and as a researcher is able to maintain a measure of detachment.

DATA SOURCE

Field research was conducted over a five-month period from January 2011 to May 2011. A regional drought crisis in the Horn of Africa precluded continued agency access.

The six participating INGOs ¹ were selected using the following criteria: (1) they are international agencies with an established presence in Kenya; (2) their funding streams are greater than US\$10 million annually from multiple donors; and (3) their Headquarters are located in either North America or Europe. These criteria were chosen as a reflection of the stability and permanency of the agencies.

INGOs as the unit of analysis are clearly specified and limit the sample of organisations under scrutiny. As international organisations, the selection process focuses on international rather than national organisations for their similarities in structure and management style that facilitates data collection and analysis. An initial letter of inquiry was sent to 12 INGOs located in Kenya that had been identified for review.

These criteria target international rather than national organisations as international agencies have established international reputations and donor relations that yield more stable funding bases and are more likely to have written strategic policies and management practices and a degree of stability that would facilitate organisational research. The presence of Headquarters in North America and Europe reflects the author's knowledge and familiarity with the policies and practices of such organisations. Finally, it should also be noted that agencies with English as the main working language were chosen for ease of comparison and the author's ability to conduct interviews and document review in the English language.²

DATA COLLECTION

The process of data collection comprised interview and document review. There were 36 semi-structured interviews conducted over the five-month period. The interviewees comprise six country office directors, four assistant country directors or equivalent, five senior programme managers or directors, six HR managers, five coordinators or line managers, four programme officers or advisors, two representatives from international foundations operational in Kenya, one donor agency and three former and current INGO senior managers not connected to the research study or the participant agencies.

Standardised interview tools are used to guide the interview process with all interviewees. However, as the interview format is semi-structured, there is room for unanticipated questions and discussion between the interviewee and the author. Standardisation has multiple benefits for data capture as it enables the researcher to gather respondents' descriptions of and perspectives on a variety of issues that can then be compared and interpreted within the context of the organisation itself. It also facilitates the comparison by the researcher of like organisations within the same field in order to develop a broader understanding and knowledge of a sector through cross-case analysis. Thus, the use of standard tools across all participant agencies provides a basis for comparison both within and

external to the organisation, a practice that strengthens the research findings (Harrison 2005).

Interviewees were asked to participate in semi-structured interviews of no more than two hours. Every effort was made to ensure that the normal day-to-day activities and procedures of the participant organisation were not interrupted, and, where necessary, interviews were rescheduled to meet organisational priorities. The interviews themselves were recorded and transcribed, and contemporaneous typed notes were also taken in some interviews.

Selected agency documentation reflects organisational discourse and facilitates the examination of stakeholder roles (Bellier 2005). The documents include organisational mission and vision statements, annual reports, organograms, minutes of senior management team meetings, organisational policies and strategic plans, project implementation surveys conducted by external consultants as well as minutes of partner workshops and meetings, and staff surveys. Documents were reviewed for evidence of stakeholder participation, particularly staff, beneficiaries and partner organisations, in decision-making processes at management meetings and on important management issues, as well as evidence of INGOs' principles and policies.

DATA ANALYSIS

In initiating data analysis, the author adopted a process of data reduction and data interpretation (Coffey and Atkinson 1996). I examined the interview transcripts and documents in detail to develop a greater understanding of how stakeholders construct their discourse, and in doing so, to uncover what might be a shared, unifying language (Bellier 2005) within the INGO, and the power relations reflected in the discourse that influence stakeholder perception of reality.

Data reduction was the first stage of data review whereby data was reduced from hours of transcripts to a more manageable size to enable the author's search for patterns (Coffey and Atkinson 1996) and to identify relevant themes and categories. The multiple-stage process of data reduction began with a review of each of the transcripts from each of the individual participant agencies. The transcript review occurred in two stages, reading firstly for "employment" and then "stakeholder participation", both themes of which directly reflect the research objectives and questions.

The classification of interviewee discourse provides evidence of who among the stakeholder groups, whether beneficiaries, partner organisations and/or staff, availed themselves of existing mechanisms and makes tangible contributions to organisational decision-making. Employees of an organisation may or may not share information internally based on an assessment of who will be the direct recipient of the information and the potential risks to the employees themselves that they perceive associated with the act of participation (Detert and Burris 2007).

The category stakeholder control illuminates the power relations and trust between stakeholder groups. This is achieved through a categorisation of evidence from interviewees of stakeholder control, particularly that of management, over the organisation's decision-making process. The selected text for the theme of "stakeholder participation" was coded by category, extracted from the transcripts and grouped by individual agency for further review during data integration.

The second phase of data analysis, data interpretation, began with a reading of the extracted materials on the "employment" theme. The purpose of this reading was to gather specific details of the recruitment and selection policies and practices of each INGO and interviewee perceptions of the role of the HR Department in contributing to strategic decision-making and organisational results.

NOTES

1. Faith-based organisations were not included in the selection as these organisations are both driven by different values and participate in their own networks that preclude comparison to secular-based organisations (see Jeavons 1994). Child-sponsorship organisations were also not included in the selection criteria as these organisations were not comparable to INGOs with the objectives outlined in this paper. Agencies headquartered in France and other French-speaking countries were excluded due to language barrier of the author.
2. As the author has limited capacity in the French language and limited knowledge of French management practices, French agencies were excluded from the sample. Future collaboration with a French-speaking practitioner could result in an interesting comparative work.

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