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Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation on Sustainability of Potato Projects in Rubanda District, Uganda

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ABSTRACT

Examining how participatory monitoring and evaluation affects the sustainability of potato projects in Rubanda District was the goal of this study. The unviability of potato projects in Rubanda District served as the basis for this investigation. The survey design used in this study was cross-sectional. A total of 139 respondents' data was gathered, and both quantitative and qualitative analysis were performed. Frequency tables were utilized to display the data because descriptive analysis involved describing a single variable and its characteristics. A Pearson correlation matrix was used at the bivariate level to determine the connections between the dependent and predictor variables. To fit the data, a linear regression model was employed. Monitoring and evaluation in potato projects have a positive impact on project sustainability, according to research findings from the regression model (R=756). The primary finding of this study is that the sustainability of potato projects in the Rubanda district is impacted by monitoring and evaluation. Therefore, the study suggests that in order to ensure the sustainability of potato projects in the Rubanda district, project managers should give careful thought to project monitoring and evaluation.

1. INTRODUCTION

A key element of project management that greatly enhances the sustainability of agricultural endeavors, including potato farming projects, is monitoring and evaluation (M&E). M&E procedures give managers ongoing input on how projects are going, empowering them to make wise choices and tweaks to enhance results (Agaba &Turyasingura, 2022). Systematic data collection, analysis, and reporting are essential components of effective M&E systems because they facilitate project performance monitoring and stakeholder accountability (Agaba *et.al*, 2023). The significance of adaptive management and learning is emphasized in the theoretical underpinnings of M&E. For example,

systems theory emphasizes the necessity of ongoing feedback loops to modify plans in response to stakeholder input and real-time data (Turyasingura *et.al*,2022**)**. This methodology guarantees that projects continue to adapt to evolving circumstances and stakeholder requirements, thereby augmenting their sustainability. It has been demonstrated that participatory M&E techniques, which include local stakeholders in data collection and analysis, are especially successful in improving project sustainability. According to Enock et.al,(2020). these methods guarantee that community members are actively involved in assessing project progress and pinpointing areas that require improvement.

Projects can become more relevant and impactful by better aligning with local needs and priorities through the involvement of stakeholders in M&E processes. Important insights into the advantages of participatory M&E can be gained from case studies from different geographical areas. For instance, potato farming initiatives in East Africa that used participatory M&E techniques reported greater stakeholder satisfaction and project success. These initiatives demonstrated how crucial it is to involve nearby farmers and community members in monitoring efforts to make sure project results satisfy their requirements and expectations. Notwithstanding the advantages, M&E in donor-funded potato projects in Rubanda District presents a number of difficulties. Effective monitoring and evaluation are frequently hampered by a lack of technical expertise among stakeholders, resource limitations, and a lack of participation in M&E procedures (Agaba and Turyasingura, 2023).These issues have made it difficult to evaluate the sustainability of potato projects in Rubanda District and make the required changes to enhance results. By prioritizing M&E in project design and implementation, donors can help ensure that projects are continuously monitored and evaluated, leading to more sustainable outcomes. Effective communication is another key component of successful M&E practices. Transparent reporting and regular feedback mechanisms can help build trust and foster collaboration among stakeholders (Ortiz *et.al*, 2019). By keeping all stakeholders informed and engaged in M&E processes, projects can ensure that their activities remain aligned with community needs and expectations.

2.LITERATURE REVIEW

Participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E) involves stakeholders, particularly farmers and community groups, in the collection, analysis, and application of data for project learning, adaptation, and accountability. PM&E is thought to improve ownership, indicator relevancy, and adaptive learning, all of which are necessary for the long-term viability of agricultural interventions (CIP, 2014). Empirical evidence from various crops and regions suggests that when Global syntheses and program evaluations indicate that participatory approaches to monitoring and evaluation enhance local accountability, contextual relevance of indicators, and iterative learning—factors associated with sustained outcomes (CIP, 2014). CGIAR and allied evaluations of root and tuber programs document that farmer participatory varietal selection (PVS), farmer field schools (FFS), and participatory impact pathways analysis (PIPA) facilitate multi-actor learning and iterative adaptation, which in turn increase the likelihood that improved technologies are both adopted and maintained (CIP, 2014; CGIAR, 2023). Nevertheless, these global assessments emphasize that PM&E contributes to sustainability primarily when it is institutionalized—i.e., when local organizations allocate resources and responsibilities for ongoing monitoring and learning—rather than functioning as a project-time activity (Birch et al., 2022). Continental analyses underscore PM&E's potential to improve seed system performance and reduce post-harvest losses through farmer-led detection of constraints and co-design of mitigation actions (FAO, 2008). Evaluations of participatory initiatives across Africa show stronger adoption of improved varieties and management practices where communities are active in monitoring and evaluation processes (FAO, 2008; R8167 Final Technical Report, 2007). However, continental reviews also stress heterogeneity in institutional capacity: where local governance structures are weak, PM&E often fails to be sustained beyond project timelines (AGRA, 2020; Warinda *et.al*, 2022). Regional studies in East Africa show a link between PM&E and long-term improvements in potato production systems.

Participatory seed potato strategies and regional stakeholder platforms have been linked to increased seed availability and farmer adoption of high-quality seed in Kenya, Uganda, and neighbouring countries (Gildemacher *et. al*., 2011; ASARECA, 2024). Evaluations of FFS and PVS in the region show that farmer participation in monitoring and varietal selection improves the fit between technologies and local preferences, thereby facilitating adoption. Regional syntheses warn, however, that scale and institutionalisation are important: PM&E practices that are not embedded in local institutions tend to lose effectiveness after donor withdrawal (Gildemacher *et al*., 2011; R8167 Final Technical Report, 2007). Regional studies in East Africa show a link between PM&E and long-term improvements in potato production systems. Participatory seed potato strategies and regional stakeholder platforms have been linked to increased seed availability and farmer adoption of high-quality seed in Kenya, Uganda, and neighbouring countries (Turyasingura, *et.al*, 2022).

Evaluations of FFS and PVS in the region show that farmer participation in monitoring and varietal selection improves the fit between technologies and local preferences, thereby facilitating adoption. Regional syntheses warn, however, that scale and institutionalisation are important: PM&E practices that are not embedded in local institutions tend to lose effectiveness after donor withdrawal (Gildemacher *et.al,* 2011; R8167 Final Technical Report, 2007). Rubanda District, a potato-producing area in southwestern Uganda, provides localized empirical data. Institutional analyses and project reports show that farmer groups, extension interactions, and participatory learning events (field days, PVS trials) help smallholder potato farmers adopt adaptive practices (Mugagga *et.al*, 2019; RUFORUM/Makerere reports, 2023). Nonetheless, the literature repeatedly mentions a reliance on project-dependent PM&E mechanisms with little formalization in local budgets and administrative roles, implying that observed gains are vulnerable to reversal when external support ends (Mugagga et al., 2019; RUFORUM, 2023).

Across scales, the empirical literature shows that PM&E can contribute to the sustainability of potato projects by (a) increasing local ownership of project activities, (b) ensuring intervention relevance to local Agro-ecologies and preferences, and (c) enabling adaptive responses to emergent problems (e.g., pests, seed degeneration). However, empirical evidence is often correlational and project-specific. Two recurring themes emerge: first, PM&E has the greatest impact when it is institutionalized within local organisations and governance structures; second, evidence on the causal mechanisms how specific PM&E practices translate into long-term institutional change and technical outcomes is limited.

Existing literature on participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E) and sustainability of potato projects demonstrates positive associations with adoption, ownership, and project relevance. However, there is limited understanding of the mechanisms through which PM&E influences long-term outcomes. Processes such as indicator co-selection, local data validation, and budgetary allocation remain underexplored, and few studies clarify how these activities contribute to the sustainability of seed systems, market linkages, and institutional capacities. Additionally, there is insufficient comparative evidence on how PM&E models perform across different institutional and governance contexts, limiting guidance for scaling interventions across Africa (Jamaal, 2022; Namugga *et. a*l, 2011; FAO, 2008; ASARECA, 2024).

Theoretical gaps in the literature are also evident. Most studies remain practice-oriented and do not adequately incorporate governance, institutional, or social capital theories to explain why participatory monitoring contributes to institutionalization, resilience, or sustained project outcomes. Furthermore, the literature does not sufficiently address power dynamics, equity, and gendered participation, leaving unclear how PM&E affects differential access to benefits and influences sustainability within potato value chains (CIP, 2014; World Bank PRGA, 2002; Mbabu *et. al*, 2014).

Methodologically, the research is dominated by cross-sectional and descriptive designs, which constrain causal inference about the effects of PM&E on long-term outcomes. There is a notable lack of longitudinal and mixed-methods studies that track institutional and technical sustainability after project completion, and few studies combine quantitative sustainability metrics with qualitative insights into decision-making processes. Additionally, variability in PM&E indicators across projects limits cross-case comparisons and meta-analyses, highlighting the need for standardized and validated measures to

support generalizable conclusions (Jamaal, 2022; Mugagga *et. al*, 2019; CGIAR, 2023; FAO, 2008; IFDC, 2020).

3.METHODS

3.1.Research Design

A cross-sectional research design was employed in this investigation. A one-time opportunity for in-depth investigation into the specifics of the data collected is provided by a cross-sectional survey (Turyasingura & Agaba,2023). By taking into account the target sample's beliefs, inclinations, routines, anxieties, attitudes, and opinions, the study extrapolated the findings to the full population. Because it took into account factors like cost-effective design, quick data collection, and the capacity to comprehend a population from a small percentage of it, a cross-sectional survey was appropriate for this study. A combination of quantitative and qualitative methods was used in a cross-sectional design.

3.2.Area of study

The study was carried out in the southwest Ugandan sub-counties of Muko and Ikumba in the Rubanda district. One of the reasons is that the majority of farmers in this district depend on growing potatoes, and donor-funded projects have long been carried out in these regions. The District is 660.2 square kilometers in size. The district's elevation above sea level varies from 1,219 meters (3,999 feet) to 2,347 meters (7,700 feet). This elevation makes the region ideal for growing Irish potatoes(Agaba , Turtasingura &, Kabagambe ,2023)

3.3.Study Population

The population, according to Plaisier, Dijkxhoorn, van Rijn, Bonnand, & Talabi, 2019). Epp et al. (2019), is the total number of people who live in a place and who belong to a particular social, cultural, socioeconomic, ethical, or racial subgroup. The sample size is the portion of the population that has been specifically selected to allow for the study of the parent's characteristics. The term "population" describes the whole set of individuals, occasions, or fascinating objects that the researcher wishes to study. Furthermore, Devaux, Goffart,Kromann, Andrade-Piedra, Polar, & Hareau,2021). contend that more dependable results are frequently obtained with larger sample sizes. However, he added that because the group being studied is homogeneous, choosing an even smaller population still yielded trustworthy results if all of the population's components were the same. A small sample was suggested as a very acceptable approximation during the study process because of the proximity to the characteristics of the investigated location. The study's target population consisted of 182 participants, including 174 farmers chosen through cluster sampling from Irish potato farmer groups, two sub-county chiefs, two community development officers, and four extension workers from the Rubanda district's production department.

3.4. Sample size determination

Devaux, et al. (2021) define a sample as a collection of a small number of a population's constituents. A subject is an individual who participates in a sample. The phrase "population" describes the entire population, events, or interesting objects that the researcher wants to examine. Thus, the study was conducted in the district of Rubanda. A sample is a portion of the population whose results are indicative of the entire population. Using Yamane's formula, a sample size of 139 was chosen. Considering a population of 182 a total number of 139 respondents was selected using the Yamane (1967:886) formula. This provided a simplified formula to calculate sample sizes.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where;

$n = sample\ size$

$N = population$
$e = level\ of\ precision$
$N = 182$
$e = 0.05$
By substituting;

$$n = \frac{182}{1 + 182(0.05)^2}$$

$$= \frac{182}{1 + 182 * 0.0025}$$

$$= 125$$

Catering for non-response of 10 % (125/1-0.1) will give a sample size of 139.

Table 1: Category of the study population, population sample size

Study population/ category	**Total population**	**Sample size to be selected**	**Sampling technique**
Selected Farmers from farmer groups	174	131	Simple random sampling
Sub county chiefs	02	02	Purposive
Community development officers	02	2	Purposive
Extension workers from the production department in Rubanda district.	04	04	Purposive
Total	**182**	**139**	

Source: Researcher, 2023

3.5.Sampling techniques and procedure

A sampling approach, according to Douthwaite (2020), is a technique by which the researcher chooses representative individuals or elements from the population. Procedures for choosing samples from the population are known as sampling methods. Compared to gathering data from the entire population, sample-based data collection is faster, less costly, and requires less work. Sampling enables a more comprehensive assessment of the items in the population. The researcher employed both purposive and cluster sampling techniques. The results come from a variety of items, people, and things that had different odds of being in the sample. Plaisier, et al. (2019) state that purposeful sampling involves selecting the sample non-randomly using the researcher's judgment and knowledge of the population. The researcher selected this method because it made it possible to select participants according to how they applied project implementation and sustainability in Rubanda District. Because only a small portion of the population with pertinent information about the study area was sampled, this sampling strategy is cost-effective, which is another reason the researcher considered it. 131 Irish potato farmers, two sub-county chiefs, two community development officers, and four extension agents from the production department in the Rubanda district were selected by the researcher using this methodology. Because it enables the collection of precise data and information from respondents who are thought to be more knowledgeable and skilled about the subject, this approach is suitable for the study.

3.6. Research Instruments

3..6.1.Questionnaire

A professionally designed instrument with statements and questions for directly collecting data from people is called a questionnaire (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). It is an essential research tool that gathers data from a large sample of respondents in a timely and accurate manner. A closed-ended questionnaire that included sections on demographic (background) data and study variables was developed and distributed to participants in order to ensure a high enough response rate for the research. Agreeing, disagreeing, being undecided, and strongly disagreeing (SD) were the five categories on which it was based. The Likert scale is highly flexible and easier to create than the majority of other attitude measures (Amin, 2005). It enables the test-taker to select the answer that best expresses their

feelings regarding each statement. Every response is weighed from 1 to 5 and averaged. (Amin 2005). Quantitative data was collected using the questionnaire.

3.6.2. Interview guide

A list of topics and inquiries that are covered during the interview is called an interview guide (Agaba et al, 2023)). An interview guide was used to facilitate the interview method of data collection. The format of the questions that served as the study's guide was used when the researcher conducted interviews.

3.7. Validity and reliability of research instruments

The degree to which data analysis results accurately represent the phenomenon being studied is known as validity (Dorothy,*et.al,*2024). The researcher pre-tested the study instruments on respondents from the Kabale District who shared characteristics with those from the Rubanda District, where the study was conducted, after creating them and consulting with the supervisors at Kabale University. Defects like unclear or confusing questions, questions with little room for answers, crowded questions, and incorrect numbering can be found and fixed by pre-testing the research tool (Kothari 2014). Four judges were asked to assess each instrument's items after the researcher conferred with the two supervisors from Kabale University. The content validity index (CVI) was then computed by dividing the percentage of valid items from each judge by the total number of items.

Thus, CVI = Number of items rated relevant by expert
Total number of items in the instrument

Summary of the reliability statistics

Judge 1. = 125139=0.899
Judge 2. =115/139= 0.827
Judge 3. = 119/135= 0.856
Judge 4. = 124/130=0.892

Therefore 0.899+0.827 +0.856+0.892=3.474. 3.474/4=0.869

These results indicated that the research instruments were suitable for collecting data on the implementation of sustainable agricultural projects. In order to be recognized as authentic, instruments must have an average content validity index (CVI) of at least the number of certified valid items divided by the total number of items, as demonstrated by an example involving potato initiatives in the Rubanda District (Amin, 2005). 0.7. The instruments were valid since the CVI value was higher than 90% (Ronald, *et.al*, 2025)

Reliability of research instruments

The degree to which an instrument consistently measures what it is intended to measure is known as its reliability (Amin, 2005). The reliability of a survey instrument is determined by the Cronbach alpha (Cronbach, 1951) reliability coefficient, which calculates the average correlation or internal consistency of the survey's items. The generated scale is more dependable the higher the score. For instance, Schrepp (2020) Masiko, *et.al*,(2024) asserts that a reliability coefficient of 0.7 alpha is adequate. In order to verify whether the results are consistent, the researcher used the same instruments on the same respondents three times to ensure reliability. The researcher carried out a pilot study on the impact of project implementation on agricultural project sustainability, specifically focusing on potato projects in Rubanda District.

The scores found at 0.7 and above alpha values indicated good credits hence better for use (Amin, 2005).

Table 1: The Demission of the Independent Variables

Variable	Reliability statistics
Relevance	0.890
Efficiency	0.904
Effectiveness	0.941
Sustainability	0.866
Total	3.601
Average	3.601/4=0.900

Source: Field data 2025

3.8.Data analysis

According to Turyasingura et al, (2022) is an evaluation of the data. To explain, summarize, and compare data, logical and statistical methods must be applied methodically.

Qualitative data analysis

In order to develop an understanding of the phenomenon being studied, the researcher coded, analyzed, and produced key themes from all of the qualitative data gathered from key informant interviews and document analysis.

Quantitative data analysis

Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used in the quantitative data analysis process. In order to determine respondents' perceptions of the impact of project implementation and sustainability of donor-funded agricultural projects in Uganda—specifically, potato projects in Rubanda District, Western Uganda—the data was first analyzed by computing frequencies, which included means and percentages. Based on two-tailed correlations and significantly more than or equal to 0.05, the correlation technique was based on Pearson's coefficient (+ or - to show the direction of the relationship between the variables). Significance was tested at 99% and 95% confidence levels. Whereas a negative correlation suggests an inverse relationship between the two variables, a positive correlation shows a direct positive relationship between the variables. To ascertain the extent to which the independent variables influenced the dependent variable, the regression analysis employed the adjusted R2 values and significance values (Benon, *et.al*,2025).

Measurement of variables

Nominal, ordinal, and interval scales were used to measure the study's variables. Information on characteristics that fall into two or more equally exclusive and mutually exclusive categories, like classifying gender and educational background, was gathered using a nominal scale. In order to gauge the respondents' varying opinions and attitudes, the researcher also employed an interval scale. To gauge responses, the study employed a 5-point Likert scale: 1-Strongly agree, 2-Agree, 3-Not sure, 4-Disagree, and 5-Strongly disagree.

4. RESULT

4.1.The effect of particiatry monitoring and evaluation in potato project on project sustainability in Rubanda District.

Examining the impact of monitoring and evaluation in potato projects on project sustainability in Rubanda District was the second goal. That is the researcher question that served as the basis for this investigation. Both primary sources (staff) and secondary sources (documented work) provided the data needed to accomplish this. The table below provides a summary of the answers.

Table 3: *descriptive statistics on participatory Monitoring and evaluation in potato project on project sustainability in Rubanda district*

Statement	5	4	3	2	1	Mean	Std dev
I have participated in potato project monitoring and evaluation	32 (23)	72 (51.8)	11 (7.9)	17 (12.2)	7 (5.1)	3.7	1.0
I have participated in the field during the potato project implementation	35 (25.2)	78 (56.1)	11 (7.9)	8 (5.8)	7 (5)	3.9	1.0
I have participated in sports visits during the potato project implementation	30 (21.6)	65 (43.2)	16 (11.5)	15 (10.8)	13 (9.4)	3.6	1.1
Potato project implementation has been successful due to participatory monitoring and evaluation	34 (24.5)	70 (50.4)	18 (12.9)	11 (7.9)	6 (4.3)	3.6	1.1

Note: Scales: 5=Strongly Agree; 4=Agree; 3=Neutral; 4=Disagree;2 =Strongly Disagree=1

Source: Field data 2025

With a mean score of 3.7 and a standard deviation of 1.0, the majority of respondents (74.5%) were asked if they had taken part in the monitoring and evaluation of potato projects, while 17.3% disagreed, leaving 7.9% unsure. A mean score of 3.9 and a standard deviation of 1.0 indicated that 81.3% of respondents agreed with the statement when asked if they had participated in the field during the implementation of the potato project, while 13.7% disagreed, leaving 16% unsure. With a mean score of 3.6 and a standard deviation of 1.1, 64.8% of respondents agreed with the statement that they had taken part in sports visits during the implementation of the potato project, compared to 20.2% who disagreed and 11.5% who were unsure. When asked if participatory monitoring and evaluation had contributed to the success of the Potato project's implementation, 74.9% of respondents agreed, while 12.9% were unsure, leaving 12.2% in disagreement. This suggests that the sustainability of potato projects in the Rubanda district will be a nightmare in the absence of participatory monitoring and evaluation. Qualitative analyses of the qualitative data generated by key informant interviews were conducted after the quantitative data was examined. The following displays the qualitative results pertaining to the monitoring and assessment of stakeholders.

Respondent

"Participatory monitoring and evaluation are essential feedback mechanisms in potato initiatives for ongoing improvement, community involvement, adaptation to changing conditions, and evidence-based decision-making. These components are crucial to the project's sustainability, guaranteeing that it will eventually continue to improve the surrounding environment and the local community. Successful project management relies on efficient monitoring and assessment. They improve policymaking, foster learning, foster accountability, and ultimately increase the sustainability and efficacy of projects as a whole.".

Following a qualitative data analysis, the study verified that there was a correlation between the quantitative and qualitative findings. It was clear that qualitative data supported quantitative data, and the two data sets agreed.

4.2.Hypothesis Testing;

As indicated in the table below, the alternative hypothesis that there is a strong relationship between stakeholders monitoring and evaluation on sustainability of agricultural projects—in this case, potato projects in Rubanda District—was thus confirmed by calculating the size of the association using Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient:

Table 4. Correlation analysis participatory monitoring and evaluation

		Sustainability of potato projects	Participatory monitoring and evaluation
Sustainability of potato projects	Pearson Correlation	1	.756**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	135	135
Participatory monitoring and evaluation	Pearson Correlation	.756**	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	135	135

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Primary Data 2025

The aforementioned table clearly shows that sustainability and stakeholder monitoring and evaluation have a positive, significant correlation ($r=.756$, $p<0.01$). According to this finding, sustainability is linked to stakeholder monitoring and evaluation**.**

Table 5 : Model summary participatory monitoring and evaluation

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.756[a]	.1512	.087	.32040

a. Predictors: (Constant), Participatory monitoring and evaluation

Source: field data 2025

The coefficient of the determinant. According to 756, the sustainability of the outcomes of potato projects in Rubanda District is influenced by the monitoring and assessment of stakeholders. This suggests that as stakeholder monitoring and evaluation of usage rises, sustainability of potato projects will be achieved. Consequently, the sustainability of potato projects in Rubanda District is impacted by stakeholder monitoring and evaluation by 75.6%.

Table 6: Regression output summary of participatory monitoring and evaluation

Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	2.680	.507		5.282	.000
Participatory monitoring and evaluation	.362	.124	.756	2.928	.004

a. Dependent Variable: Sustainability of potato projects

Source: Field Data 2025

Table 6 shows Results again showed a significant connection with a regression coefficient of.456 at the 0.01 level of significance. With a Beta value of 0.756 at 95% confidence, the findings further demonstrate that participatory monitoring and evaluation have an impact on sustainability of potato projects. The research hypothesis that " participatory monitoring and evaluation has no effect on sustainability of potato projects in Rubanda District " is therefore rejected by the researcher.

5. DISCUSSION

The objective of this research was to examine the effect of participatory monitoring and evaluation in potato projects on project sustainability in Rubanda District. The findings of the data collection and analysis showed that there was a significant and positive association between the two variables. Qualitative results demonstrated the effect of monitoring and evaluation in potato projects on project sustainability in Rubanda District. This is consistent with agaba *et. al,* (2022), which promotes monitoring and evaluation to make sure the project stays on track, adjusts to changing conditions, successfully engages the community, and conforms with environmental and market demands. Together, these elements support the long-term viability of potato projects and other agricultural Endeavor's. A key element of project management that greatly enhances the sustainability of agricultural Endeavor's, including potato farming projects, is monitoring and evaluation (M&E). M&E procedures give managers ongoing input on how projects are going, empowering them to make wise choices and tweaks to enhance results (Turyasingura *et.al*, 2023). In order to track project performance and guarantee accountability to stakeholders, effective M&E systems entail systematic data collection, analysis, and reporting (Devaux, et al, 2021). Adaptive learning and management are key components of M&E's theoretical underpinnings. According to Agaba *et.al*, (2022), Systems Theory emphasizes the necessity of ongoing feedback loops to modify strategies in response to stakeholder inputs and real-time data. This strategy improves the sustainability of projects by making sure they stay adaptable to shifting circumstances and stakeholder demands. It has been demonstrated that participatory M&E techniques, which include local stakeholders in data collection and analysis, are especially successful in improving project sustainability. According to Turyasingura, *et. al*, (2020), these methods guarantee that community members are actively involved in assessing project progress and pinpointing areas that require improvement. Projects can become more relevant and impactful by better aligning with local

needs and priorities through the involvement of stakeholders in M&E processes. Important insights into the advantages of participatory M&E can be gained from case studies from different geographical areas. For instance, potato farming initiatives in East Africa that used participatory M&E techniques reported greater stakeholder satisfaction and project success (Turyasingura *et.al,* 2022). In order to make sure that project outcomes satisfied their needs and expectations, these projects highlighted the significance of involving local farmers and community members in monitoring activities. Despite the advantages, M&E in donor-funded potato projects presents a number of difficulties. Effective monitoring and evaluation are frequently hampered by a lack of technical expertise among stakeholders, resource limitations, and a lack of participation in M&E procedures (Turyasingura *et. al*, 2022). These issues have made it difficult to evaluate the sustainability of potato projects in Rubanda District and make the required changes to enhance results.

6.CONCLUSION

The study's main finding is that participatory methods help beneficiaries and project implementers communicate more effectively. This enhanced communication not only facilitates early problem identification but also enables flexible management techniques that can adapt to shifting conditions. Furthermore, farmers who actively participate in assessing their own methods gain a better understanding of sustainable farming methods, which enhances crop yields and resource management.

7.RECOMMENDATION

The study suggests that both project beneficiaries and donors should prioritize participatory monitoring and evaluation in order to ensure the sustainability of potato projects in Rubanda District. This will address the issue of unsustainable projects.

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