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## **A perspective on the relationship between partnership and sustainability of child-care organisations in Uganda**

**David Ekwang Otto & David Mwesigwa**

Faculty of Management Sciences, Lira University, Uganda

Corresponding author: [dmwesigwa@lirauni.ac.ug](mailto:dmwesigwa@lirauni.ac.ug)

### **Abstract**

**Purpose:** This study aimed to discuss the relationship between partnership and sustainability of child care organisations in Uganda. This was largely so because it has become clearer that modern day child-care organisations lack ability to continue operating beyond the donor or sponsorship yet sustainability is a key ingredient in child-care organisational initiation. This limitation has placed cumulative burden on child-care organisations wishing to enhance their sustainability by ensuring that they put greater emphasis on partnerships in terms of coordination, networks and collaboration both from within and without. And bearing in mind the countless trials and the signal of dearth of partnership through networks, coordination and collaboration in not-for-profit child-care organisations in Uganda, the motivation of this study is on how Ugandan child-care organisations can achieve sustainability in the competitive 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**Methodology:** The study adopted a desk review method, some earlier theories on child-care as well as various literatures on each of the three constructs of networks, coordination and collaboration are debated as a base for drawing recommendations to different stakeholders.

**Results:** It can be noted that for sustainability to be achieved in a child-care organisation, emphasis needs to be put to the three issues of networks, coordination, and collaboration.

**Unique contribution to theory, policy and practice:** The outcomes of this analysis are helpful to the different theories and policies on child care organisations in northern Uganda and the country in general.

**Keywords:** *Partnership, Sustainability, Networks, Coordination, Collaboration*

## INTRODUCTION

This study provides an analysis of related literature that presents other authors works on the topic. The presentation was done based on the research objectives presented in this chapter. This analysis was done following the topic on the analysis of the significance of partnerships to the sustainability of institutionalized children's care in Lira city. This was deemed very significant in a number of ways to various stakeholders: to begin with, authorities in the government of Uganda such as the Ministry of Education and sports, the Ministry of labour, and Social Development will find this study important in understanding the significance of partnerships to the sustainability of institutionalized children's care and the challenges faced by orphans so that they can institute measures to enable them to work more effectively and willingly. Also, this review may assist the various non-state actors within Lira city that work with children in various ways by helping them or the organizations understand how the environment affects children's education as well as their educational needs and try to come up with ways to assist them so that they cease being among members of disadvantaged groups in society, at least as far as education matters are concerned. Further, it can facilitate in improving institutionalized children's academic performance, the findings of this study will therefore help administrators and teachers design strategies on how to cater for the needs of children in the institutionalized home. Additionally, it is hoped to help policymakers in formulating and implementing policies that focus on improving the living conditions of orphans, both institutionalized and non-institutionalized. And, the review will be of great significance other researcher since it will add to the pool of knowledge about institutionalized children's homes and the significance of partnerships to the sustainability of institutionalized children's care. This will broaden the researchers' understanding about institutionalized care and the gaps for further investigation.

Institutional care is considered a living arrangement for more than ten (10) children without their parents or relatives in which the caregivers provide all the basic needs for those children under the instruction of administrators (McLaren & Qonita, 2019). Additionally, the other commonly used terms for institutionalized children's homes include residential care and orphanages, it is usually characterized by a large number of children under the care of a small number of adults. The history of institutionalised care dates back to around 400AD when the Jewish law prescribed care for widows and orphans. In addition, Plato (927) noted: "Orphans should be placed under the care of public guardians". In the 18th century, the first charitable institution for orphans was established (in the year 1739) by a sea captain Thomas Coram in London and England, and by around 1756, the House of Commons resolved that every orphaned child ought to be received, that local receptions be appointed all over the country and baskets placed outside to collect the support for orphans. According to Whitney (2019), charitable organizations, in a number of western countries, are believed to have started orphan care in an institutionalized home on the basis of religious orders, confraternities, and municipalities as a response to the effects created by plagues and the growing levels of poverty at the time, which made most of the orphans to be abandoned by their relatives. The Social Security Act of 1935 allowed the conditions for orphans by authorizing aid for orphaned

children by institutionalizing them; providing basic needs, quality education, as well as health care services (Chumakova et al., 2020).

## **THEORETICAL REVIEW**

This study was based on the Froebelian principles that highlight the importance of family and community (Kambouri, 2022) in exploring the importance of collaboration and communication as part of a two-way dialogue. The aim was to identify the key characteristics of a model that would encourage interest and commitment to partnerships from both parents and practitioners. The idea of such partnerships has a solid theoretical background and is supported both rhetorically and by legislation by the Department of Education (Government). The theory was used to develop the 'CAFE' partnership model which incorporates those elements considered important to facilitate the development of partnerships between practitioners and parents. The CAFE model addresses the gap in the literature in terms of unpicking the key features of a partnership approach, as captured through the experience of both parents and practitioners. It also contributes to deepening the understanding of the applications of Froebelian principles in contemporary contexts and the ways in which they can encourage high quality early childhood development and education. Future research should explore how this model could be used to evaluate existing practice and guide the development of current partnership policies and approaches.

### *Networking and sustainability of institutionalized children homes*

The children living in institutionalized children's homes are believed to be isolated from the community, and sometimes those places may be far from their originality, and they may be unable to maintain relationships with their parents or close relatives. Orphan children are segregated based on their age, gender, and disability. A study conducted on the impact of young children in institutional care revealed that most of those children lack immediate response to emotional support from their caregivers, and sometimes there could be delays in the provision of food, clothing, cleaning, and even some financial assistance in terms of pocket money (Gunnar & Reid, 2019). The study done on integrated intervention in early childhood pointed out that partnership by networking ensures effectiveness in service delivery in an organization. The partnership enables the provision of services, creates contacts between different employees, knowledge sharing, and the organization gains the potential to provide the quality of services. A study conducted on the Use of Network Analysis to Strengthen Community Partnerships reveals that community partnerships or networks of collaborating public and not-for-profit organizations are an important way of addressing a wide range of problems and needs that communities face (The Use of Network Analysis to Strengthen Community Partnerships-Provan-2005-Public Administration Review-Wiley Online Library, 2022).

Studies have suggested that the services provided to institutionalized children's homes vary greatly both in terms of their organizational principles and structure and in terms of the quality of care provided. This closely depends on how the organization partners with the other entities, either providing the same service or other forms of service. A study on strategic networking for sustainability, pointed out that partnership by networking accelerates mutual

learning, sharing of problems, understanding, joint development of the organization and exchange of ideas or solutions through representation and identity. This suggests that partnership through networking is likely to enhance effective development, implementation, adaptation, and quick recoveries from any catastrophe. Furthermore, a study conducted on community innovation and networking in Canada revealed that partnership by networking promotes the development of the organization through the enhancement of economic, social, political, and cultural capabilities; the creation, provision, and use of community-oriented learning opportunities; and the development of community-oriented cultural content, open source software, learning tools, and broadband infrastructures in terms of congruence of behaviours and individual propensity to engage in organised activities (Cesario, Agapito, Almeida & Fernades, 2017). This is based on the fact that in networking, qualified personnel are always brought on board to manage the organization. Another study done to evaluate the local private partnership in Greece reveals that partnership by networking provides an efficient tool by adopting, integrating, and implementing action-based awareness since different players work together. This suggests a clear evidence on the long-term viability of the decentralized bio-energy production model established in Agro-energy districts, which can provide an incentive and a safe environment for the development of an energy production plant.

Similar studies have established that multi-stakeholder partnership for sustainability: designing the decision-making process for partnership contributed significantly to the development of the organization and enabled the organization to achieve its goals in a short period of time. It enables the different stakeholders with multi-disciplinary qualifications to make decisions collaboratively on the development of the organization. These have been described to be key in particular environments such as hospitality industry to fight food wastage (De Visser-Amundson, 2022) or societal global challenges that call for complex solutions (Webb & Orr, 2021) or even in vibrant information communication technologies (Munyua, 2016). In addition to that, a study done on building a community of practice for sustainability found out that partnership through networking-built trust, established shared norms and common interests, created incentives to participate, generated value in information sharing and willingness to engage, demonstrated an effective flow of information, and provided leadership and facilitation.

In their study on University partnership on the environment and sustainability revealed that partnership by networking promotes participation of different stakeholders, builds employees' capacity within the organization, and enhances financial sustainability within the organization (Tache, et al., 2008). While, that study may be over ten years ago, its relevance is seen in addressing both shortages and enhancing continuity. The numerous literatures reviewed, the researcher identified that most of the research done was not focused in Uganda and particularly Lira city on the institutionalized care, partnerships and sustainability of institutionalized children's care. To worsen the situation, the few studies conducted in Uganda are not current since several things have happened in the past four years, including COVID-19.

*Coordination and the sustainability of institutionalized children homes*

The sustainability of institutionalized child care seems interactive based on the fact that clear coordination between one sector and another or from one individual to another enhances the productivity in the organization. A study done on the bounds of compliance in coordination found out that partnership by coordination promoted awareness within and outside the organization, enabled actors within the organization to recognize the sustainability problems and monitor the progress of the implemented program or project, this helps to overcome resource constraints within an child-care organisation (Liu, 2021). Another study on coordination and sustainability. All the organizations and the project implementers must focus on coordination between different sectors in those fields (Mani et al., 2020). This clearly implies that partnership by coordination is the fundamental tool in promoting organizational development. Also, mechanical coordination, internal coordination, and external coordination are required for the sustainability of institutionalized child care in a study on implementing sustainability on a corporate and functional level: key contingencies that influence the required coordination. Therefore, partnership by coordination ensures flows of information, resources, knowledge and skills from one organization to another or from an individual to another. To implement corporate sustainability, there should be more internal coordination than implementing sustainability at the functional level.

In this study, we contend that partnership by coordination enhances training. The benefits of training are the promotion of efficient and effective operations. It helps teachers and learners to learn quickly and effectively, thus minimizing learning costs and enhancing performance. It is also noted that when people learn, they improve their performance because they have acquired skills. Existing staff can be helped by training to improve their work performance and to keep them up-to-date in their specialized field. The present and future state of work required by the organization are more likely to be achieved and maintained if employees are well trained. Training also acts as a motivating factor and enhances the commitment of teachers to the organization, hence making it able to develop and retain its employees.

The issue of multi-sector partnerships and sustainability has been pointed out in such a way that partnership by collaboration enables the different stakeholders with multi-disciplinary qualifications to make decisions on the development of the organization (Wang, Yu & Shen, 2019). In addition to that, a study done on building a community of practice for sustainability found out that partnership through networking built trust, established shared norms and common interests, created incentives to participate, generated value in information sharing and willingness to engage, demonstrated an effective flow of information, and provided leadership and facilitation. A separate study established that the implementation of partnership by coordination is a key in addressing community problems. This requires bringing together stakeholders from business, government, and the non-profit sector (Tervo-Kankare, 2011). At the municipal level, partnerships by coordination are often formed to implement community sustainability plans, hence promoting the sustainability of the projects. The study also concluded that partnership by coordination positively and significantly correlates with the climate mitigation outcome, which in turn enhances the sustainability of different strategies.

It can be acknowledged that no study had been conducted and documented on partnerships and sustainability of institutionalized children's care or the factors affecting the academic performance of children in an institutionalized home. Those studies which has been conducted does not fits the local context as in Uganda due to differences in cultural aspects, political, geographical and economic status. More so, almost all the study conducted were in middle- and high-income countries in which the results cannot be applied in Lira city and Uganda in general.

#### *Collaboration and the sustainability of institutionalized children's homes*

Partnership is one of the fundamental tools in the development of an institution or organization based on its ability to allow goal setting, capacity building, strengthening leadership, ownership, allowing the quality of production, bridging the gaps between two different entities, and sustainability of the organization. Leffers & Mitchell (2011) in a study on the conceptual model for partnership and sustainability in global health revealed that collaboration is an essential component of partnership since it allows sharing of resources, skills, knowledge, and even labour. This benefit both organizations because the rate of program coverage increases significantly. In an institutionalized children's home, collaboration allows expansion of the structures and increases the number of orphans served by the organization. Different management skills and knowledge are always brought in, hence promoting organizational sustainability (Harrison et al., 2019). A study done by Graci (2013) pointed out that moving toward the sustainability of the organization needs partnership and most organizational leaders who lack collaboration with other leaders always fail to achieve their agenda. Collaboration, specifically through multi-stakeholder partnerships, has been seen as an effective way to support initiatives in tourism development. The partnership that has been developed, called the Gili Ecotrust, provides an example of successful collaboration, leading to the implementation of innovative sustainability initiatives on the island. Another Jamal & Stronza (2009) found out that partnership by collaboration is the validity of organizational sustainability. Therefore, implementation of the partnership by collaboration promotes the development of the organization since different brains are always brought together.

A study by Barlian (2020) on the exploration of the hornet's characteristics of orphans on the implication in education revealed that lack of social activity within institutionalized children's homes and the living conditions of those children contribute a lot to the academic performance of children in an orphanage. In addition to that, the study conducted in Malaysia about the improvement of skills among the adolescents living in orphanages found factors such as lack of health services, primary health care, and scholastic materials as the major challenges affecting institutionalized children's homes (Mohammadzadeh et al., 2019). Another study conducted by supply chain collaboration and sustainability reveals that collaboration ensures the growth of the business while lack of collaboration is associated with the collapse of the business (Chen et al., 2017). In addition to that, collaboration for the purpose of sustainability is gaining growing attention in the business field. However, environmental and economic considerations still dominate the research, while there is a lack of consideration of social concerns such as child labour and personal development. In addition, the collaboration partners

under investigation have mainly been the company and its customers and suppliers, whereas competitors and other horizontal collaboration partners have received little attention. Finally, a study done by Kim & Brown (2018) found out that partnership by collaboration increases efficiency and growth of the organization. The study also shows that information transparency, information immutability, accountability, and smart contracts significantly affect partnership growth and have marginal effects on the partnership. The literature reviews established that more emphasis was focused on general organizations not specifically on the institutionalized children care. The few studies done were based in developed countries with high standard of living compared to the poor resource setting in Africa.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is clear that partnership plays a great role in realising sustainability of a child-care organisation. While this notion appears truer in not-for-profitmaking child-care organisation, it may equally be true for the profit-oriented child-care organisations as well as the public sector given the scope of stakeholders. Nonetheless, this review shows that there was no study related to the objectives under study found in Lira city, and the researcher did not find any literature related to partnerships in institutionalized children's homes in terms of networks, coordination and collaboration. Also, few studies had been conducted in Uganda on institutionalized children's homes (orphanages) in the country. Given these gaps, it is envisaged that further studies be conducted seeing that partnership does not contribute up to 100% to the sustainability of institutionalized children's care. This implies that there are other factors required for the sustainability of institutionalized child care that calls for further research such as:

- a) The effects of COVID-19 lockdown on the operation of institutionalized children's homes.
- b) The impact of international donations to the operations of the institutionalized children's homes should be conducted.
- c) The impact of the institutionalized children's homes to education of girls in post Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) war region of northern Uganda.

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