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RESEARCH ARTICLE

ROLE OF NON GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION IN IMPROVING THE LIVELIHOOD OF RURAL COMMUNITY: THE CASE OF WORLD VISION ETHIOPIA

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ABSTRACT

The study was undertaken with the prime objective of evaluating the role of World Vision in improving the livelihood of the rural community in Soddo Area District, Wolayta Zone. Descriptive survey design was used. Household survey was conducted among 175 households who were randomly selected from five kebeles (villages) on proportionate to their population size. Structured questionnaire was prepared, pretested and distributed among the sample respondents for collection of primary data. Furthermore, face to face interview was also conducted among 15 members who were purposively selected from local government officials and World Vision staff. Focus group discussion and critical observations of various variables were also conducted. The collected data have been analyzed by using the integration of qualitative and quantitative methods. Descriptive statistics were widely used to analyze quantitative data. Sustainable Livelihood Model has been used as a conceptual framework whereby the major livelihood components such as food security and agriculture, health, education, potable water supply and credit and saving schemes are discussed. The findings of the study revealed that the role of World Vision in the major livelihood components was found to be highly significant in the study area. Its attempt to provide potable water, however, has been hampered by the quality of the constructed water points. Community participation and government cooperation were found to be the best opportunities whereas, recurrent draught, low level of the community's education and land size have been found to be the major challenges of livelihood improvement of the community. The communities in the study area believed that the World Vision contribute a lot for their livelihood improvement. It was recommended that the World Vision need to take appropriate actions to improve the quality of their water points through constructing deeper wells and raising awareness of the community. Introducing an integrated irrigation program has been advised as the major cause for this is related to rain fall irregularity. It is recommended that the World Vision work in collaboration with the community itself and with government on the possibilities of introducing adolescent education to the community. Alternative agricultural technologies relevant to small land size have been recommended.

INTRODUCTION

In Ethiopia Over the past fifteen years, the headcount poverty rate declined by about 93 percent from 45.5 percent in 2000 (23.5) percent in 2016. According the recent Household Consumption Expenditure Survey report, between 2010/11 and 2015/16 about 5.3 million people are lifted out of poverty. Poverty gap and poverty severity indices have respectively declined from 10.1 percent and 3.9 percent in 2000 to 3.7 percent and 1.4 percent in 2016. Nonetheless poverty is still a challenge in Ethiopia as over 22 million people are living below the national poverty line in Ethiopia. Poverty is primarily rural phenomenon in Ethiopia. While urban headcount poverty declined from 36.9 percent in 2000 to 14.8 percent in 2016 rural poverty only declined from 45.4 percent to 25.6 percent in the same period (UNDP, 2018). The major causes of the high prevalence of poverty in Ethiopia include

lack of access to financial services, employment opportunities, income, skill, education, health etc. Further noted is that provision of financial services is one of the important economic inputs in the effort to reduce poverty and empower economically marginalized segments of the society (Tolera, 2017). Accordingly to Mohamed (2017), Poverty for the year 2015, 2016, 2017, Poverty frequency, Gap and severity were equal to 18.02%, 5.25% and 2.31% respectively for the urban SNNPR. Urban poverty measured by the above indexes leaves relatively larger figures. In the last five years the Region's urban poverty reduces unusually except for food poverty severity which rose by 17.24% (Mohamed, 2017). The Government of Ethiopia encourages both private and NGO sectors in its attempt to improve the livelihood of the rural community. This is essential for the country suffering from huge resource exhaustion and human resource problems. According to OECD (1983), NGOs constitute the third major

channel through which development assistance is provided to people of the Third World after bilateral and multilateral aid agencies. Some believe that the realization of effective development without the involvement of NGOs is very difficult. In support of this, Tegegne (2000) stated that: "Today it would appear strange to talk of the Third World's development without mentioning NGO's with the increasing number of NGOs entering the development field and with growing recognition and support they are getting from the public, rich governments and donor agencies around the world. NGOs have increasingly become important in the development process of the Third World." One indication of the government's attention to support and closely follow up NGOs is evidenced by the new proclamation that was brought into effect on the registration and regulation of charities and societies in the country in 2009. This proclamation also introduced a standalone agency named Charities of Societies Agency (ChSA) that follows up the implementation of the regulations of the proclamation. The number of NGOs in Ethiopia has tremendously increased from time to time. Arguably, they have contributed to the development of the country in different sectors in almost all the corners.

Statement of the Problem

Ethiopia is among the countries in Sub-Saharan Africa with most precarious, long-term drought and famine situations. Historical documents show that the country has experienced famine over more countries. The catastrophe of serious draught and famine the country has faced so far is about 44 (Degefa, 2005). The problem of food insecurity and well-being of households still happen to be a serious one in most parts of the country. Soddo Zuriya Woreda of the Wolyita Zone is one of such areas being seriously challenged. The area is characterized by chronic food insecurity with periodic incidents of acute food insecurity resulting in high levels of malnutrition, distress mitigation and scale of household assets. Livelihood implementation in such a chronically food insecure and sensitive area is challenging. Conducting effective, participatory and vulnerability analysis for program planning, developing programs against short as well as long-term objectives, maintaining emergency capacity within program staff and incorporation of disaster risk reduction strategies are often problems for a community like Soddo Zuriya Woreda. Development and response to such situations of draught and food insecurity is a complex process that requires the attention and collaboration of all stakeholders: the community, the government and NGOs. NGOs being the fundamental stakeholders in the subject, they are expected to play a pivotal role in improving the livelihood of the rural community. According to Browne (1999), their role is claimed to be an additional role to increase the impact to development programs in activities in grassroots development and poverty alleviation. Despite these expectations, many tend to question the significant contribution of NGOs in Ethiopia to improving the livelihoods of the community. Some of the arguments forwarded in this regard are related to the NGOs' inability to reach the needy, addressing immediate needs than long term sustainable development issues, creating a sense of dependency on the side of the community and inefficiency to use designated resources to the primary objective (Abera, 2006). Some even argue that NGOs are only there to implement their implicit objective and not for sure to help the community. The poor is highly being utilized for some to use their personal, political and religious objectives (Hancock, 1989). There are quite a number of NGOs operating in Soddo

Zuriya Woreda of Wolyita Zone working to improve the livelihood of the rural community. This research is therefore, to study the role of World Vision in improving the livelihood of the rural community and tried to address the questions such as What significant roles that have been played by world vision for the improvement of the livelihood of the rural community of Soddo Zuriya Woreda? What challenges have the World Vision faced in their livelihood intervention programs in Soddo Zuriya Woreda? What opportunities are there for the World Vision to effectively implement their livelihood improvement program for Soddo Zuriya Woreda?

Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the study were:

1. To assess the role of World Vision on the livelihood of the rural community of Soddo Area Woreda and
2. To identify the challenges and opportunities of WVE for effective implementation of livelihood improvement programs in the rural community of Soddo Area Woreda.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Description of the study area: Soddo Area Woreda is found in Wolyita Zone of the Southern Nations Nationalities People's Regional State. It is found at 350 km South from Addis Ababa and some 156 Km from Hawassa, the region's capital.

Research design: Both qualitative and quantitative research design was employed in the study. It is believed that using the combination of the two methods enable to collect qualitative and quantitative data to address problems under the study.

Sources of data: The study used both primary and secondary sources to collect data. The study involved different groups of people who are directly related to the World Vision. Accordingly, the community, World Vision management and staff, government offices and private sectors formed the base for primary sources of data for the research

Sample size and sampling technique: Soddo Area Woreda has 31 Kebeles (Villages) out of which World Vision is operating in 20 Kebeles. The researcher has selected five out of 20 operational kebeles on random basis by considering the geographical proximity and number of beneficiaries in each kebele. Among the selected 5 operational Kebeles, the number of households included in the study was determined by using the formula developed by Yamane (1967). Accordingly a total of 175 households were selected on the basis of simple random sampling technique.

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

Where:

n=Sample size

N= Total Population

e= Sampling Error (Level of Precision)

$$n = \frac{1210}{1 + 1210(0.07)^2}$$

n = 175

Therefore, n can be taken as 175 beneficiary households

Table 1. Sample frame

S.No	Kebele	Total Beneficiaries	Sample size
1	Dalbo Wogane	300	43
2	Kokate	260	38
3	Zala Shasha	240	35
4	Ziga Borkoshe	210	30
5	Lasho	200	29
	Total	1210	175

Source: World Vision Ethiopia and Kebele Registry, 2014

Tools and method of data collection: Data was collected using questionnaire, Key informant interview and focus group discussion as the nature of the study demands the integration of varied forms. The interview was done with five kebele leaders, four World Vision employees, and different government sector heads (Agriculture(1), Health(1), Education(1), Micro and Small Scale Institutes(1), Social Affairs and Women(1) and Children Affairs Office (1). Focus group discussion was also held with three women and five men to gather additional data from the households.

Method of data analysis: Data was analyzed using descriptive statistical tools like frequencies, percentages, Mean and Standard Deviation. Furthermore inferential statistics like one sample t-test were used to compare sample mean with expected population mean (calculated sample mean with population mean). Data collected through interviews and focus group discussion were analyzed qualitatively using narrative for triangulation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Role of World Vision on the improvement of livelihood: NGOs have important contributions to play in supporting women and vulnerable groups, and expected that they can meet the welfare. Some of the contributions and functions of NGOs, includes counselling and support service, awareness raising and advocacy, legal aid and microfinance. These services help the people to achieve their ability, skill, knowledge, and take control over their own lives and finally become empowered. Among the wide variety of World Visions contributions, the following were identified as common in the study area:

Table 2: Types of support received by the beneficiaries (n=175)

Types of support	Mode of support (Multiple responses)			
	Direct		Indirect	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Food aid	144	82.3	18	10.3
Training	132	75.4	37	21.1
Financial aid	40	22.9	112	64.0
Education	73	41.7	94	53.7
Health	140	80.0	22	12.6
Potable water	61	34.9	98	56.0
Credit & Saving	61	34.9	83	47.4

Source: Field survey, 2018

As shown on Table 2, beneficiaries were asked about the types of support that obtain from World Vision. Accordingly, 82.3% of respondents got food aid directly whereas about 10.3% of them got indirectly. About 75.4% of them got training directly where as 21.1% of them got indirectly. Regarding financial support about 22.9% directly and 64% indirectly, education

support about 41.7% directly and 53.7% indirectly, health support about 80% directly and 12.6% indirectly, about potable water supply and credit saving about 34.9% of them got directly whereas 56% and 47.4% of got indirectly.

Table 3. Status of children education after intervention

Status	Frequency	%	Test value = 2		
			Mean	SD	t-test
Improved	157	89.7	2.9	0.4	31.0***
Slightly improved	15	8.6			
Not improved	03	1.7			

Source: Field survey, 2018

Note: *** Significant at P<0.001 probability level

Table 3 presents the status of children education after intervention of World Vision. Out of the total respondents, the majority of the respondents (89.7%) revealed that the status of children education after intervention of world vision has improved. Whereas 8.6% and 1.7% of them responded that slightly improved and not improved respectively. Furthermore, the results of the t-test (Mean=2.9, SD=0.4, t-value=31, p<0.001) indicates that the status of children education after intervention of World Vision was improved.

Table 4. Accessibility to health care services after intervention

Status	Frequency	%	Test value = 2		
			Mean	SD	t-test
Improved	157	89.7	2.8	0.5	20.0***
Slightly improved	05	2.9			
Not improved	13	7.4			

Source: Field survey, 2018

Note: *** Significant at P<0.001 probability level

Regarding accessibility to health care after intervention of world vision, about 7.4% of the respondents replied no improvement on the accessibility to health care after intervention of World Vision. Whereas 2.9% of the respondents responded that the accessibility to health care after intervention of World Vision had no change and the rest 89.7% of the respondents responded that the accessibility to health care after intervention of World Vision was improved. A t-test was computed to check whether the opinion difference exist between the mean value and standard test value. Accordingly, the t-test with test value 2 (Mean=2.8, SD=0.5, t-value= 20, p<0.001) indicates that the accessibility to health care after intervention of World Vision was improved.

However, key informant Interview and focus group discussions with household heads and World vision staff also supplement the response given by the household heads. Remarkably many health posts have been constructed by the World Vision in the community. Provision of health post medical supplies like refrigerators, microscopes and medicines have also been mentioned as areas of intervention. Training on different health related issues like HIV/AIDS, nutrition and skills for health extension workers has also been part of their intervention.

Table 5. Accessibility to potable water after intervention

Status	Frequency	%	Test value = 2		
			Mean	SD	t-test
Improved	149	85.1	2.7	0.7	14.3***
Slightly improved	22	12.6			
Not improved	04	2.3			

Source: Field survey, 2018

Note: *** Significant at P<0.001 probability level

As shown in Table 5, about 85.1% of the respondents replied that the accessibility to potable water after intervention of World Vision was improved. Whereas 12.6% of the respondents said that there was a slight improvement on the accessibility to potable water after intervention of World Vision and the rest 2.3% of them replied no improvement. A t-test was computed to check whether the opinion difference exist between the mean value and standard test value. Accordingly, the t-test with test value 2 (Mean=2.7, SD=0.7, t-value= 14.3, $p < 0.001$) indicates that the accessibility to potable water after intervention of World Vision was improved. Even though World Vision has created access to potable water to the community, it doesn't mean that this is a guarantee for the entire community for safe water. In view of this, the results of the focus group discussions revealed that the quality of the water points constructed to create potable water access to the community exposed to algae and bacteria.

Table 6. Status of food security after intervention

Status	Frequency	%	Test value = 2		
			Mean	SD	t-test
Improved	160	91.4	2.9	0.4	26.5***
Slightly improved	08	4.6			
Not improved	07	4.0			

Source: Field survey, 2018

Note: *** Significant at $P < 0.001$ probability level

As shown in Table 6, about 91.4% of the respondents opined that the status of food security after intervention of World Vision was improved. Whereas 4.6% and 4% of the respondents responded that there is no change in food security after intervention of World Vision and not improved respectively. A t-test was computed to check whether the opinion difference exist between the mean value and standard test value. Accordingly, the t-test with test value 2 (Mean=2.9, SD=0.4, t-value= 16.5, $p < 0.001$) indicates that the status of food security after intervention of World Vision was improved. The results of FGDs and key informant interview depicted that some of the food security interventions include input provision, capacity building training, environmental conservation and re-habitation and disaster mitigation. Improved seeds, fertilizer, provision of cows and poultry support have also been mentioned as important interventions by the World Vision. The key informants added that World Vision in the study has stayed in the community for more than 15 years. The household heads were asked to point out whether they have received food aid support from WV at times of food shortage. For a very volatile Woreda like Soddo Area that repeatedly suffers from draughts and has food insecurity, this form of support for the community is vital.

Challenges of WVE for Effective Implementation of Livelihood Programs

The challenges of WVE for effective implementation of livelihood programs have been gauged through key informant interview and focus group discussion with many stakeholders. The results are narrated below.

Agriculture related challenges: Agriculture is the major income source for the households of the respondents and hence for the community. Even though this is the case, size of land holding of the community is very limited and World Vision found it very difficult to fully engage in long term agricultural programs with the community. According to the Woreda

Agriculture Office, this is mainly because of the large size of the community and the majority of the land owners have less than one hectare of land. Farmers of the community have also said that they don't have enough land to fully engage and be introduced to new agricultural technologies. The recurrent draught and famine in the area is also another challenge of the community. One major contribution is the fluctuation of rain. Agricultural productivity in the Woreda, above all, relies on the irregularity of the seasonal rainfall. According to the Woreda Agriculture Officer, the Woreda has experienced a long term fluctuation of the seasonal rainfall. Absence or limited access to irrigation could not counter attack the problem of rainfall shortages. World Vision is often compelled to draw themselves out of the long term sustainable livelihood intervention programs to be engaged in emergency situations. Shortage of agricultural inputs in the market with quality and quantity is another challenge witnessed in the interview. The Woreda has poor experience in using modern agricultural inputs that can boost productivity. An attempt to improve these problems by World Vision is challenged by lack of modern technologies in the area and community's resistance to be introduced to the technologies.

Education related challenges: The education level of the community, as indicated in the demographic information in this study, is very low. Respondents of the interview and participants of FGDs have pointed out that the low level of education of the community to be a challenge to introduce new and modern concepts of livelihood interventions. The community is often found to be resistant to changes because of this. A World Vision official has said that the community has a problem of understanding the long term effects of sustainable development and prefers to go for short termed interventions as a result of awareness problem.

Market linkage related challenges: Some of the Kebeles (Villages) in the Woreda have difficulty in road infrastructure. They can't be easily accessed. World Vision attempt in improving the livelihood of these communities is seriously challenged because of this. Farmers/the rural community doesn't get it easy to sell products that have been made a reality with the help of World Vision and as a result of this; self-resilience could not be realized. At times the transportation access is possible to make, costs and demand problems have also been a challenge for the community. Either there is no demand for the products or they are given cheaper costs. According to the FGDs it is the merchants that came from the urban centres who have by far become beneficiaries from the exchanges in the rural community.

Resource related challenges: Interview results with the World Vision Soddo Area Development sector heads and staff have shown that limited resource to reach the whole community of the Woreda has been a challenge to them. Resources are scarce. WVE has also indicated both financial and human resources problem as challenges. Scarce human resource of the government sector office to work with the WV is also pointed out to be a challenge in the livelihood intervention.

Sector office related challenges: Availability of sector offices to work together has come out to be the biggest challenge. It was pointed out that sector heads and specialists are busy with their business and have not given enough time to work with World Vision. Lack of flexibility from government staff in dealing with World Vision has also been discussed as a

challenge. According to WVE, conflict of interest has also been a challenge that arises from either lack of awareness on WVE business or personal interests to benefit out of the relationship. Lack of accountability and responsibility of some completed projects is also another challenge raised by World Vision in the interview. According to them, the government needs to own completed projects with the community. Targets are selected with the kebele administration and a bias is often noted during the process.

Intra-Organization related challenges: Key informant interview and FGD results shows that there are problems related to organizational structure and staff relationships. Results of the discussion have shown that there are some roles that are not clear as they didn't have job description. Unnecessary misunderstandings have been created between the management and the staff as a result of the aforementioned stumbling blocks. Lack of resources to reach communities and different initiatives coming time to time have been challenges to WVE.

Opportunities for Effective Livelihood Interventions:

World Vision Sector heads, staff and government sector office leaders were interviewed and FGDs were also conducted to investigate the kind of opportunities made available for World Vision to effectively implement their livelihood improvement programs. The *first* is related to good political will and administration by the government. The government has given clear guideline for World Vision operations in the country. The administration of World Vision through this guideline and strategic priorities clearly set in the five years Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) which is considered as supports for the operation of World Vision in the livelihood programs. Although the community is identified as change resistant, it has also been complemented for its active participation in the development activities. The attitude of the community and readiness to benefit and work with the World Vision has been vital. The community's engagement in evaluation of projects is also another opportunity. The opportunity to encourage them (government and the community) in identifying problems together, planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, reflection and transition is an added value to WVE. Continuous resource and fund flow for budgeted activities from donors is also another opportunity made available to effectively implement livelihood programs. Results of FGDs show that World Vision Soddo Area program often undertake all planned activities and of resource scarcity does not affect them. Although realization of reaching more and more community was mentioned as a challenge, planned and budgeted activities have successfully been implemented with uninterrupted fund from donors. Committed and enough human resources have been instrumental opportunities rendered to WVE. Interview results from WVE heads and staff have shown that their offices have been staffed enough with qualified and experienced personnel to run all the planned livelihood activities. Interest and willingness of government to work with World Vision operating in the area has been mentioned as an opportunity. According to the World Vision staff, this might help their offices in focusing in some areas of intervention after having shared responsibilities. According to them, the more they target in specific areas, the higher the impacts of their interventions would be.

Conclusion

To conclude, World Vision, Soddo Zuriya Woreda has played a significant role on the improvement of education in the

community. The community members are able to send children to school because of the new school constructions and additional block constructions that have been made by the World Vision. The rural community has also benefited from the health interventions of the World Vision. Creating access to potable water WVE has aggressively been engaged. Its intervention has remarkably improved the water supply of the community. Although the access to water is created in less than 3 kms, the community is still forced to drink unsafe water because of the quality of the water points constructed to create water access. Regarding food security area, WVE has played a pivotal role. Its intervention in providing food aid during crisis and food insecurity has benefited. The area is known for recurrent draught and food insecurity and the fact that the community is supported in food aid at such a time is mandatory. One of the important interventions that would enable a community to sustain its livelihoods is the provision of saving and credit schemes. The major reason of the community's engagement in the saving and credit scheme program has been income generating. Although many challenges have been discussed in the study, it is the researcher's observation that the major and most critical ones are the recurrent draught in the area, lack of formal education from the community side and small land size. Given the fact that the community's major source of income is agriculture and the size of the land ownership is very slow is a major problem. It might be very difficult to think of an overall livelihoods improvement in the community if the community stays agriculture dependent for its source of income. To use the available land in an efficient and effective way, knowledge and skill acquired from training and education are required. It can be concluded that the World Vision Soddo Area Program effort to improve the livelihood of the community has really been challenged by elements which are critical to a society's advancement. Despite the challenges discussed above, there have really been some good opportunities created to the world vision to operate in livelihood improvement interventions. The community of Soddo Zuriya Woreda is not only willing and participative in the livelihood interventions of World Vision; they also think and believe that the world vision's roles are significant for their community.

Recommendations

On the basis of the findings obtained and the conclusions reached, the following suggestions are forwarded:

1. It is suggested that the World Vision Soddo Area Development program has to take appropriate actions to improve the quality of their water points through constructing deeper wells, proper protection from algae and bacteria, raising the awareness of the community and selection of appropriate materials.
2. The World Vision need to work diligently on improved agricultural methods like using pesticides and nonfarm activities together with the community and the local government as the main reason for the draught is fluctuation of rain fall in the Woreda.
3. The good political will and readiness from the government of Ethiopia to work with World Vision Ethiopia as manifested by different policies and guidelines is mentioned as a significant opportunity. The case being this, lack of flexibility and getting time from local government staffs is also a challenge. World

vision in this regard need to strictly abide to the rules and regulations of the government as major reasons for the question of inflexibility are related to meeting standards. It is also recommended to strengthen their networking and communication skills.

4. Finally the researcher recommends that a more detailed and comprehensive investigation in the same area is made so as to further strengthen the findings of this study. Because, the main task in this small survey is not to conclude rather it is a mere attempt to explore.

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