

Innovations

An investigation on the variables influencing the implementation of community-driven projects in Ethiopia

Dr. Thangarasu Velmurugan,

Assistant Professor, Department of Social Work – JJU, Ethiopia

Dr. Mohd Shakil

Assistant Professor, Department of Social Work – JJU, Ethiopia

Mr. Ahmed Mahamud Bade

Lecturer, Department of Social Work – JJU, Ethiopia

Mr. Mohamoud Mohamed Nour

Head & Lecturer, Department of Social Work – JJU, Ethiopia

Mr. Mustafe Abdirahman Abdi

Lecturer, Department of Social Work – JJU, Ethiopia

Corresponding author: **Dr. Thangarasu Velmurugan,**

Abstract

The Community Driven Project is now a widely accepted Development strategy across the continent. It is a development strategy that focuses on delegating the identification, control, and management of development programs to members of the local community. This study was conducted in the Somali Region of Ethiopia with the main goal of identifying the key success factors for the implementation of community-driven projects in the Somali Region. The researcher employed a descriptive research design, and respondents were chosen through simple random sampling. The Statistical package for social scientists was used to analyze the data (SPSS). According to the study findings, the majority of respondents are aware of the concept of community driven development, but the majority of them are unable to identify the key characteristics of community driven development. This is due to the fact that the majority of respondents stated that they had not received CDD training. The study discovered some of the key factors that promote community participation, such as capacity building, the availability of structures for participation, the availability of resources, and the District Council's willingness to empower communities to manage community-driven projects.

Key words: 1.Community,2. Community Driven development, 3.Participation, awareness

1. Introduction

There have been numerous challenges in most African countries in terms of the implementation and sustainability of community projects. The majority of development projects have failed to achieve their intended outcomes due to a lack of community ownership and participation in their development and implementation. Top-down approaches were used by development agents in the design and implementation of community projects, resulting in projects that were not well aligned with the needs and aspirations of community members. This has also had a negative impact on the sustainability of these programs, as it has been observed that after the project funded period has ended,

community members lack the zeal to continue project activities. Against this backdrop, development organizations such as the World Bank are now promoting community-driven projects. Community driven projects are development initiatives that give groups in the community direct control over the development process, resources, and decision-making authority. In Ethiopia, community-driven projects can be found in all districts, including the Somali Region, which is the primary study area.

2. Background of the study

Community Driven Development (CDD) is among the fastest growing mechanisms for channeling development assistance to poor and underprivileged communities. The Community Drive Development concept was originally developed by World Bank in a pursuit of promoting projects where communities have direct control over key project decisions as resources the project (Rao 2003).

According to the World Bank, Community Driven Development contains five main components which are: Empowering communities, Empowering local governments, Re-aligning the center, improving accountability and finally Building capacity (Nguyen 2005). Most practitioners think of community development as an outcome in terms of physical, social, and economic improvement in a community but the concept is much broader than just the outcome as it also pays much attention on the various processes that takes places hence it is process oriented. It is important to note that the Community Driven Development approach treats local communities as important and crucial assets and partners in the development process. The CDD builds on the institutions and resources of the poor in partnership with Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) while demanding responsive support from organizations and service providers including elected local governments, the private sector, NGOs, and central government agencies. Decentralization supported by a robust regulatory and policy framework is key in the successful implementation of community driven projects

The underlying assumption of community driven development is that communities are the best judges of how their lives and livelihoods can be improved and, if provided with resources and information, they can organize themselves to provide their immediate needs and then consequently sustain the development activities. There is now a glowing body of evidence that community driven projects are being effective in assisting communities to develop and sustain their development programs. This is supported by the fact that the main principle of community driven development is the transfer of power, control and resources to the community members thus empowering the community members to be in charge of their development destiny. This is achieved through the building up of community confidence and capacities to identify and priorities their problems and then take action to effectively address those problems in a sustainable way. Therefore, community driven development is not only focused on how the community is working at the grass roots, but also how responsive key institution including government and civil society organizations are to the needs of local communities

It is very evident that Community Driven Development is an approach to effectively and efficiently provide social and infrastructure services; organize economic activity and resource management; empower poor people; improve governance; and enhance security of the poorest. According to the World Bank, support to CDD usually includes strengthening inclusive community groups; facilitating community access to information; and promoting an enabling environment for participatory local governance through the policy and institutional reform. Therefore, the fundamental elements of CDD are actually political in nature (Dongier et.al, 2002). The CDD empowers local people, helps to build upon and expand existing social capital and improves governance. Empowerment here is not only limited to gaining access to resources and services but also be viewed as empowerment in making decision for oneself and community at large. The social capital expansion and its use utilize all available human and non-human resources for the benefit of local communities. Bourdieu 1986, has described social capital as, 'the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition'. The definition stresses on mutual effort and web of social relationship that helps to attain a vibrant and thriving community. The governance aspect of CDD is a mechanism which helps local community to plan, work and drive development by themselves. The governance aspect of CDD is

an intrinsic part as it directs and enables community for decision making roles. The control over decision making and local resources also enables community to widen their social capital and networks which evenly helps to empower the community. In a nutshell, all three aspects of empowerment, social capital and governance are complimentary to each other. The institutionalization effort of development is another vital component of the CDD, the development practices and intervention of the past largely relied on outsiders as a savior or messiah, helping the poor or down trodden locals.

The Ethiopian Economy has experienced high economic growth and has one of the fastest growing populations. Yet poverty levels remain high. The department of community development under the Community Development and Social welfare is tasked with alleviating extreme poverty and suffering (C. Dorasamy 2018). The Ethiopian Government is very committed to the implementation of Community Driven Development projects. During the Community Driven Development process, the Community members start by electing a Development Committee and then select development projects at a meeting organised by an existing community organisation or a newly established community project committee. Most CDD programmes require a community project committee to be set up to manage the development projects. The Committee is responsible for the overall implementation of the community projects which also includes management of funds, procurement of construction materials, recruitment of contractors and the overall monitoring of the implementation of the project activities. For the successful implementation of the assigned task, the committee is thoroughly trained in project management and also their roles and responsibilities. From the available literature CDD projects have made a greater impact in the areas of Infrastructure development, building of social cohesion and community empowerment, increased participation of marginalized groups such as women, promoting equity and sustainability of project interventions

3. Problem Statement

Community Driven Projects have become an important form of development assistance, with the World Bank portfolio alone approximating \$7 Billion. In Ethiopia there are various stakeholders that are involved in the implementation of community driven development projects with the Government of Community Development and Social services in the forefront helping various societies to implement community driven projects. It is evident that Ethiopia has increasingly implemented community driven projects in a number of areas including Somali Region in order to improve the lives of Ethiopians who have been stricken with poverty and other social challenges. However, it has been noted that the success rate of community driven projects in Ethiopia is mixed as some projects have recorded successful and sustainable results while other projects have failed to meet the expectations. Therefore, it is against this background that it is important to identify the critical success factors for the implementation of such projects as this information can be used in the design and implementation of upcoming projects so as to increase the success rate. Therefore, against this background this study was conducted to identify the critical success factors for the implementation of community Driven Projects in Ethiopia.

4. Research Objectives

The main objective of the study was to identify the critical factors for the successful implementation of Community Driven Projects in Ethiopia. The following were the specific objectives of the study:

1. To assess the level of the community and stakeholders understanding of the concept of Community Driven Development in Somali Region
2. To identify the factors affecting implementation of Community driven projects in Somali Region
3. To find out the levels of community participation in community driven projects in Somali Region
4. To examine the effectiveness of the Structures for participation in Somali Region
5. To identify the challenges faced in the implementation of Community Driven Development projects in Somali Region

5. Significance and justification of study

The results of this study can be useful to a number of important stakeholders such the government of Ethiopia, NGOs, Donors and Communities as it will provide important insights on the implementation of Community Driven Projects in Ethiopia and will also bring to light the key success factors for CDD projects.

6. Literature Review

Community development requires the involvement and participation of local residents in identifying the strategies they wish to use to improve their quality of life. Participation is seen as developmental, educative, and integrative and as a means of protecting freedom (Robert, 2004). One of the key assumptions of participation is that local residents will be more supportive of the project, and therefore increase the likelihood of its success, if residents have input in the decision-making process. Also, local residents probably have a better knowledge about assets and needs of the community.

Projects are often initiated in the context of a turbulent, unpredictable and dynamic environment (Jeffrey and Dennis, 1987). Many projects, therefore, are usually bedeviled by challenges, constraints and risks as they are execution through completion. Consequently, despite the significant input of human and financial resources, many fall short of expectation. Many failed to meet the priority needs of target beneficiaries, costs escalated, stated outputs were not achieved or if achieved were not sustained, implementation dates slipped by or adverse outcomes were not anticipated. Projects are influenced by a multiple of factors which can be external or internal to the organization responsible for its management and execution. These include poor project management, inadequate opportunities for potential beneficiaries to participate in project identification and design, poor linkages between project activities and project purpose, insufficient attention to external environment during project design, among others. It has also been recognized that projects were likely to succeed when account was taken of socio-economic context in which they operated (Batten, 1957).

The government plays a pivotal role in community development projects' funding, initiation, implementation and overall management. It provides the enabling policy and legal environment for the regulation of finance and the procurement of goods, works and services. CBOs and NGOs and their activities are regulated through legal mechanisms devised by the government. Government policy to NGOs is wide ranging and depends largely on political factors within a country, and may be repressive or supportive (Green and Haines, 2008, p265). The government may create the need to participate in information sharing platforms to discuss development progression in their communities. Their representatives keep watch on the performance of community development programs. Ideally local governments need to demand for NGOs' accountability (Busiinge, 2010).

The underlying assumption of CDD projects are that communities are the best judges of how their lives and livelihoods can be improved and, if provided with adequate resources and information, they can organize themselves to provide for their immediate needs. CDD projects work by providing poor communities with direct funding for development with the communities then deciding how to spend the money. Lastly, the community plans and builds the project and takes responsibility for monitoring its progress

Community-Driven Development (CDD) programs operate on the principles of transparency, participation, local empowerment, demand-responsiveness, greater downward accountability, and enhanced local capacity

7. Research Methodology

The research design that was used in the study was a case study and this design was selected as it focused on providing evidences for the selected case rather than generalizing empirical facts and evidences. The study is based on qualitative design but not limited to observation, in-depth individual interviews, focus groups, biographical methods such as life histories and narratives, and analysis of available documents and texts. The respondents were sampled using Simple random method and data collection was done through semi structured interviews by the use of a semi structured questionnaire. The total sample size was 200 respondents from Somali Region in Ethiopia. Data was analyzed through the use of SPSS

The information collected in this research was very sensitive as such confidentiality and privacy was respected at all times. The researcher obtained consent to all who participated in this study. The researcher disclosed to the respondents the use of the data collected before the actual collection of data had started.

8. Research Key Findings

Below is a presentation of the key findings of the study basing on the study objectives

8.1 The level of the community and stakeholders understanding of the concept of Community Driven Development

The successful implementation of community driven development projects mainly hinges on the level of understanding of the community members and other stakeholders on the concept of community driven development. In relation to the awareness levels on the concept of community driven development, the results shows that 50% are aware and 50% are not aware. This shows that half of the community members are aware of the concept of community driven development. However, to ascertain the levels of awareness the respondents were asked on their knowledge on the characteristics of Community Driven Development. The results shows that 40% indicated Local people control decisions and resources, 40% indicated Government and NGOs control project and 20% indicated that they don't know. This result shows that only 40% of the respondents have a good understand of the characteristics of community driven development as according to the World Bank the key defining characteristic of community driven development is the transfer of power and resources to the community members

In terms of awareness on the specific Community Driven Development projects being implemented in the area. The results shows that 80% are ware and 20% are not aware of specific CDD projects being implemented. This shows that in the study area majority of the respondents are aware of some community driven projects being implemented. According to which CDD project they know that are being implemented in their area the results shows that 30% indicated roads projects, 10% indicated food security projects, 20% reported education projects, 10% education projects and 30% reported that they don't know any CDD projects in their areas. To achieve success in community driven development the sensitization of local people on the concept is very important and the when asked if they agree that local people should be sensitized of CDD for active participation. The results show that 70% reported that they should be sensitized and 30% reported that they should not.

In order to raise awareness, it is important for the Distract council to create structures for participation and the study results according to the channels that have been put in place by DC to raise awareness of CDD. The results shows that 30% reported through community awareness meetings, 30% through trainings of communities, 30% through radio and TV programs and 10% do not know the channels

8.2 The factors affecting implementation of Community driven projects in Somali Region

From literature there are quite a number of factors that affect the implementation of community driven development. The results of the study showed that capacity building of communities is an important factor for the successful implementation of community driven development projects. According to if capacity building important for CDP implementation and the results show that 60 percent reported that capacity building is important, 30% reported that it is not important and 10% were not sure. This shows that capacity building is highly valued by the community members. In view of this the respondents were asked on whether they attended capacity building trainings and the results show that 11% indicated that they have attended while 89% reported that they have not attended any CDD and according to if they know other people in their community who have received CDD training. The results shows that 70% reported that they don't know any other person who attended the training before and 30% reported that they know some community members who have attended the training. This shows that majority of the community members have not been trained on the concept of community driven development

Another key aspect for the successful implementation of CDD projects is the establishment of necessary structures for enhances community participation. The results show that 30% reported that they have CDD structures and 70% reported that they don't have CDD structures. This shows that majority of the respondents are not aware of CDD

structures and this will consequently affect their participation. According to what structures are in place for enhanced community participation in CDD projects. The results show that 30% reported village committees, 10% reported through community representatives, 10% reported others and 50% reported that no structures are available. The availability of resources is also another defining factor for the successful implementation of CDD projects. The results shows that 40% reported that the District Council has set aside resources for CDD while, 60% reported that the District Council has not put in place resources available for community driven development. This still shows that majority of the respondents are not well aware of CDD resources. For those that indicated that they are aware of resources The results shows that 10% reported that local people should use their own resources 60% reported lack of resources at the District Council and 30% reported Bureaucracy at the DC. In addition, on other incentives for community participation, 20% of the respondents reported that there are incentives, 70% reported that no incentives exist and 10% are not sure if incentives exist or not. This shows that majority of the respondents feel that no incentives are available to enhance community participation in CDD

8.3 The levels of community participation in community driven projects

The level at which communities participates is a key element of community Driven projects the results according to if communities participating in the CDPs and the results shows that 20% reported that they are participating and 80% reported that they are not participating. This shows that majority of the respondents are not participating in CDD. In terms of those participating they highlighted the following as the methods for participation: participating through selecting projects (20%) controlling resources (10%) and 70% of the respondents reported that they don't know the ways in which communities are participating

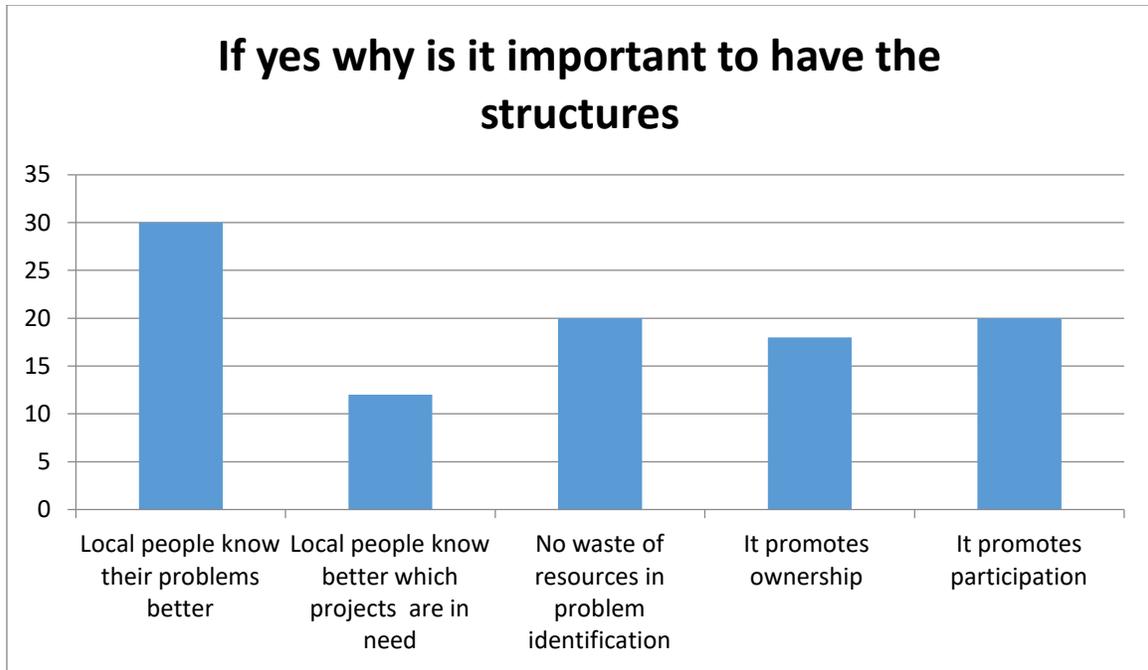
As it has been seen majority of the respondents are not participating in CDD projects and the following are the reasons for non-participation: 30% reported that that they are not participating because they are not aware of such projects, 20% reported that they are not participating as they said council officials perceive it a waste of time to involve communities, 10% reported that they are not participating due to other reasons and 40% reported that they are not participating because they don't know any CDPs

8.4 The effectiveness of the Structures for participation

Majority of the respondents feel structures are important for the effective delivery of community driven projects According to if they feel it's important to have structures for participation. 80% reported that it is important and 20% reported that it is not important to have structures for participation. In relation to if they use the structures fir participation and the results shows that 40% reported using the structures and 60% reported not using the structures and this shows that majority of the respondents are not suing the CDD structures. According to reasons for not using the structures the results indicates that 20% do not use the structures because the structures are politicized, 30% reported lack of opportunities to use the structures, 30% reported that places for meeting are far away and 20% reported that the structures are not available

Table 1 Why is it important to have the structures?

If yes, why is it important to have the structures	Frequency	Percent
Local people know their problems better	15	30
Local people know better which projects are in need	6	12
No waste of resources in problem identification	10	20
It promotes ownership	9	18
It promotes participation	10	20
Total	50	100.0



The table and figure 1, above show the distribution of respondents according to the reasons for having the structures for community participation. 30% reported its because local people know their problems better, 12% reported that Local people know better which projects are in need, 20% reported that No waste of resources in problem identification, 18% reported that it promotes community ownership and 20% reported that it promotes participation of the locals

8.5 Challenges faced in the implementation of Community Driven Development projects

Community members face a wide range of challenges in the implementation of community driven development. If these challenges are not addressed then the implementation of CDD projects is greatly affected. According to the challenges the communities are facing in the implementation of CDD. 40% reported lack of resources, 20% reported limited capacity, 10% reported corruption and 30% reported unwillingness of DC to hand over power

9. Conclusion and Recommendations

Community participation is very important for the successful implementation of community driven development projects. The study has unearthed some of the key factors that promotes community participation and these includes capacity building, availability of structures for participation, availability of resources and willingness of the Regional to empower communities to manage community driven projects.

Based on the study findings the researchers make the following recommendations

- The Council/regional should ensure that adequate community sensitization is done for enhanced participation
- The Council/regional should ensure that all the necessary structures are in place to enable communities to participate in CDD
- There is need for the allocation of adequate resources for CDD programs

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