

Contribution of Community Development activities for improvement of rural livelihoods: A study in Somali Region in Ethiopia

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Abstract

This study is undertaken to find the contribution Pastoral Community Development Project (PCDP) to rural livelihood improvement in Somali region. PCDP and other means of livelihood positively affect income and it can be concluded that the PCDP has contributed in improving the income-poverty status of the project beneficiary. Given the strategic importance of the project to the target community and the significant changes it is bringing about in their lives, the author strongly recommends the need to explore funding opportunities for continuation of PCDP or similar other projects to improve access to basic social and economic services for pastoral and agro-pastoral that dwell in the remaining kebeles of the woreda that have not benefited from PCDP in the past.

Key words: *livelihood, income poverty, earnings access economic service.*

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I. Introduction

The most of the rural community are vulnerable to either internal or external or both shocks like natural disasters, seasonal hardship etc particularly in Ethiopia. They lack enough resource and capabilities to sustain their livelihood which is emanated from limited access to credit and their engagement in low income generating activities. This vulnerability to external shocks and almost negligible capacity to mitigate those shocks forced them to sell their asset and destroy their environment and these reaction pushes them to deeper dimness of poverty (Mesfin W/Tsadik 2018).Worldwide, Government and Nongovernmental organizations adopts social protection measures that aims to help the poor households to sustain their minimum livelihood, deals with shocks and thus preserve their natural endowments. In an effort to smash the cycle of annual plea of food aid and achieve an acceptable level of food security at large-scale and micro (household) level, the government of Ethiopia and World Bank established community development activities like PCDP that works in pastoral and agro pastoral area of Ethiopia (Ministry of Peace 2019). Which were three phases and this is the last phase which is going to be end the year.

PCDP has, through the Community Driven Development (CDD) approach, significantly strengthened community institutions enabling them to develop inclusive community development plans to inform investment priorities at kebele, woreda and regional levels, and has improved the access to community demand-driven social and economic services for pastoral and agro-pastoral communities in Ethiopia. This study is undertaken to find the contribution Pastoral Community Development Project (PCDP) to rural livelihood improvement in Somali region. PCDP and other means of livelihood positively affect income and it can be concluded that the PCDP has contributed in improving the income-poverty status of the project beneficiary. Given the strategic importance of the project to the target community and the significant changes it is bringing about in their lives, the author strongly recommends the need to explore funding opportunities for continuation of PCDP or similar other projects to improve access to basic social and economic services for pastoral and agro-pastoral that dwell in the remaining kebeles of the woreda that have not benefited from PCDP in the past.

II. Studies

There are studies conducted in this issue like pastoralism is an economic activity and land use system with its own distinct characteristics and it is a way of life for people who derive most of their income or sustenance from keeping domestic livestock reared in conditions where most of the feed is natural rather than cultivated or closely managed (Solom, 2020).As the World Bank mission report (2018) indicates the

Community Investment Fund implementation were processed as it was planned. (RPCU) (2019) annual reports shows, The world bank mission is pleased to have noted that the recommendation to add atypical items to improve service from community sub-projects has been adopted producing outputs but need to monitor immediate results. ICOS, project midterm evaluation report, (2018) explained, the project targeted to enroll additional 48,641 students in PCDP constructed primary schools by the end of its third year of implementation. The project has progressed well in addressing some of the public services such as primary school, human and animal health facility, and access to financial services. Despite observed improvements particularly on education and health in the past three years, access to water, primary school and health services have remained the top three priority needs of the majority of the target communities.

The project was also effective in achieving targets set for SACCOs result areas. The number of SACCOs established by the project so far is much larger than the target set for the first three years. Most SACCOs visited during observation were also found operational. Their establishment has improved access to financial services and promoted engagement in IGAs by members. The seed money provided by the project has also played important roles in enabling SACCOs to provide loans to members. The project has also improved saving culture of the community. But membership in SACCOs has remained very low owing to bad precedence in the past, lack of income due to drought, inadequate or lack of awareness, and other factors. Given the sizable seed money injected by the project, existing SACCO members seem to want to retain their current share in the seed capital probably at the cost of increasing membership size.

III. Issues And Discussion

Given that water shortage has become a number one problem in both pastoral and agro pastoral areas, the project needs to work more on water development. Attention may need to be given to deep water well construction for human and livestock consumption, and irrigation in the remaining timeline as doing so would reduce mobility and improve social and economic wellbeing of target communities. Given that water shortage is now the number one priority need of target communities, there is a need to increase fund ceiling to allow construction of deep water wells in areas where shallow wells cannot provide sustainable access to improved water source. However, as increasing fund ceiling would also increase the communities' contribution, it may not be a feasible strategy given the low economic status of target communities. Besides, deep well construction projects may be beyond the capacity of the community to manage like other small size CIF projects. In light of this, allocation of separate budget for financing mid-size projects such as construction of deep water wells that can be managed by relevant regional government agencies is strongly recommended. Mobilize resources and increase project budget, and coordinate with other development partners to address some of the many unaddressed needs of the target communities. The high unmet priority need would also call for the need to think of opportunities for extension or continuation of the project in another phase.

IV. Conclusions And Suggestions

Increasing fund ceiling would also increase the communities' contribution, it may not be a feasible strategy given the low economic status of target communities. Besides, deep well construction projects may be beyond the capacity of the community to manage like other small size CIF projects. In light of this, allocation of separate budget for financing mid-size projects such as construction of deep water wells that can be managed by relevant regional government agencies is strongly recommended.

V. Suggestions

- Strengthen SACCOs' leadership capacity and install kebele-level support mechanisms for SACCOs to help them have access to continued technical support and follow-up.
- Given that the project has covered only nine kebeles in PCDP-3 woreda, there are still other kebeles in this woreda that have not benefited from the project.
- Given the strategic importance of the project to the target community and the significant changes it is bringing about in their lives, the author strongly recommends the need to explore funding opportunities for continuation of PCDP or similar other projects to improve access to basic social and economic services for pastoral and agro-pastoral that dwell in the remaining kebeles of the woreda that have not benefited from PCDP in the past.

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